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Sight and Sound

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Tokyo stories**

**Cecil B. DeMille's
Orientalism**

**Filming Bruce
Chatwin's 'Utz'**

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INSIDE

Why Jodie Foster matters



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Sight and Sound

RONALD GRANT



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Contributors to this issue

Peter Biskind is author of several books on cinema
Ian Christie has recently edited a volume on Soviet and Russian cinema; it is reviewed in this issue
Tom Dewe Matthews is writing a book on censorship
Michael Eaton has written television and film scripts including the award-winning *Fellow Traveller*
John Ellis is an independent television producer
Sarah Ferguson is a freelance based in Paris and working for the BBC, among others
Simon Frith has published widely on popular culture, particularly music
Peter Goodwin writes for numerous publications on broadcasting
Kevin Jackson is the author of *Schrader on Schrader*
Kim Newman is a novelist and freelance critic
B. Ruby Rich has written widely on cinema; she interviewed Jodie Foster for the Walker Arts Center retrospective
Tony Rayns has programmed many seasons including the ICA's 'Young Japanese Cinema'

In Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs*, Hannibal Lecter is at one stage imprisoned in a cage, a scene indebted in its iconography less to Thomas Harris' novel than to Francis Bacon's caged figures. These in their turn draw not only on Velasquez' paintings, but on the photographs of Eadweard Muybridge.

This modest example of traffic across the arts may not have been quite what Kandinsky had hoped for at the beginning of the century when he proclaimed "the arts have never been closer to one another", but it does register that artists are often splendidly indifferent to academic boundaries. Eisenstein's work on El Greco, Philip Guston's claim that in his late paintings he was "a movie director", and Graham Greene's film reviews in the 30s, which fed his novelistic practice – these are only three examples of modern artists eager to learn from practices other than their own.

A number of articles in this issue reflect on the traffic between cinema and the other arts, pushing one to the conclusion that film is less a category than a relationship, not least with the other arts, and needs to be understood as such. Ian Christie's piece on Cecil B. DeMille makes brief reference to correspondences between the director and the Symbolists as well as tracing the better-known story of the relationship between theatre and DeMille's cinema. Kevin Jackson's article looks at the tense but fruitful relationship between the printed word and the moving image. Tom Phillips' painting and text remind us how film has altered the resources of modern painting, a subject still under-researched. Tony Rayns' piece suggests how new innovative Japanese films are related to work in 'exploitation' videos. And the book reviews by Simon Frith and John Ellis reflect, respectively, on how even art films now spawn books and on the

increasing intimacy of cinema and television.

Historically, critics – at least in Britain – have been less promiscuous in their interests than practitioners (although there have been significant exceptions) and too often have been intent on establishing the distinct and inviolable identity of a particular practice ('Literature', 'Film', 'Art').

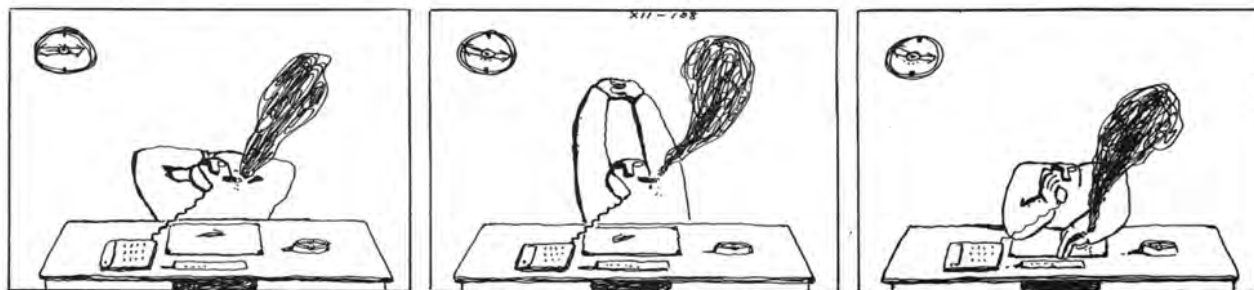
This specialisation has, of course, brought real gains. Previously undervalued kinds of work have been given academic respectability – and rigorous kinds of appropriate analysis have been forged to address the particularities of different practices. But the separation has at the same time led to strange institutional arrangements. For example, Literature and the History of Art were housed in Universities, and the practice of art and film in art colleges. The Arts Council was made responsible for "artists' films and videos", while the BFI's remit was wider.

More recently in subject areas such as Cultural Studies there has been an attempt to reconstitute disciplinary boundaries in more productive ways. But the impulse behind Cultural Studies remains primarily critical – there is insufficient attention to how works can be made and sustained now, how various are the resources contemporary artists (including film-makers) draw on.

The late Raymond Williams once wrote that this was a "culture rotten with criticism", and by this he seemed to mean that a criticism divorced from advocating and sustaining work was in the end sterile. This condition is profoundly exacerbated when the present arrangements separate out so rigorously criticism from practice. In the end, what does such an isolated criticism have to say to the arts which are (still) struggling to grow together?

JERRY ON LINE #1

Peter Lydon – James Sillavan ©



'Jerry, I feel let-down by the cinema going public. We give them romance, they want adventure. We give them adventure, they want gangster. We give them gangster, they want romance. Tell me Jerry, are we a year ahead of them, or a year behind?'

Condemned to repeats

Michael Eaton

Next to marriage, death was always one of the most popular forms of closure in the classic American film. Once the monster was dispatched, we could be pretty sure that the tale was over and we could rush for the exit to avoid being caught by the strains of the National Anthem. These days, we no longer have that security.

Robin Williams' de-frocked shrink in *Dead Again* tells us that most people in the world believe in reincarnation – although since when has safety in numbers been a central tenet of psychiatric justification? Nevertheless, the operation of the karmic cycle does seem to be this season's ideology of choice from Hollywood. Reincarnation might indeed be a comforting belief system for an industry desperate in its search for the kind of fable which can generate a sequel.

Or maybe the head-shrinker is right – maybe most of the adolescent, popcorn-crunching target audience in today's cinemas are quite prepared to accept that death is not the end, that we all come round again. G. K. Chesterton said that when people stop believing in God, they don't believe in nothing, they believe in anything. But I suspect that what the Williams character is really saying is that for this particular tale to work, you have to believe in a simplified and Californianised version of metempsychosis. The majority of the world's population is thus mobilised in a preventive attempt to curtail the audience from finding fault with the plot.

I am quite prepared to suspend any amount of disbelief in the furtherance of the enjoyment of a good yarn. But increasingly the disbelief I have to suspend depends not so much on being prepared to accept an alien philosophy for ninety minutes, but on willing myself to suppress apprehensions that I've literally 'been here before' and that this film is exactly the same as the one I saw last week. It's a real sign of age when it's not just the adverts you think you've seen already.

It's only to be expected. After all, they do say that there are only seven plots in the world. Psychiatrists of a different methodological background from the one in Kenneth Branagh's film will, of course, tell you that there's really only one: Oedipus. And recently I heard from the American screenwriter Lorenzo Semple Jr that there are only two possible premises for stories: *The Odd Couple* and *The Fish Out of Water*. It sounds daft, but it does seem to work. Although Oedipus, if you think about it, is a bit of both.

Another story which contains elements of both these archetypes is *Chinatown*. I have been waiting since 1973 for it to be reincarnated in the shape of Robert Towne's sequel, *The Two Jakes*, which from its title seems to indicate that we are in the realm of *The Odd Couple*. Like everyone



Jack Nicholson, director and star of 'The Two Jakes' – just one example of Hollywood's lusty after reincarnation

else who is a fan of the Polanski original, I breathed a sigh of relief when I read that the pre-production difficulties had been surmounted and that it was finally to be made with its star, Jack Nicholson, at the helm. But these hopes were dashed when the picture closed almost before it opened, reeking from critical opprobrium. It is now to receive only a modest release here.

Having only as yet witnessed, through a glass darkly (now there's an *Odd Couple* movie), an extremely flawed VHS copy, I am nevertheless prepared to go on record and state that the picture is not half bad. True, the story is almost entirely lacking in suspense if you've seen the original, and probably quite difficult to understand if you haven't – an almost parodic private-eye voiceover has been overlaid presumably for the benefit of those not yet acquainted with the world of J. J. Gittes. I cannot think of another Hollywood sequel that has had to wait as long as seventeen years to be re-birthed, so it is only to be expected that there are some infelicities of address.

But what is impressive about *Chinatown* is still reincarnated in its sequel: the dialectic between a highly charged and melodramatic emotional core and a real, recognisable and even politically delineated depiction of the world in which the story is set. The city is not mere metaphorical background, as in most *noir* tales. Indeed, the attempts of the robber barons to bring, for their own financial benefit, water to the wilderness provide the very engine that fires the plot.

So now it is the economic machinations that underpinned the post-war development of Los Angeles that *The Two Jakes* is interested in. And the picture is worthy of support if for no other reason

than because its story develops from the increasingly unusual premise that there is a world outside the world of story.

This is not the dark, downtown world of the post-war *film noir*, but the shadowless, sun-charred tracts of the San Fernando Valley, where fragile, suburban, jerry-built homes for heroes are being thrown up over seismic faults. Indeed, night time is a time of relief from the heat and the car fumes which clog up the air of the day. It is sunlight which is dangerous. If the artificial city of *Chinatown* depended on water, the expanding LA of the 40s needs oil to drive the automobiles which make this demographic dispersal possible.

Now Jake Gittes is a successful businessman, a golf-playing member of the Wilshire Country Club, in co-responder shoes. But like every *noir* hero, he is still haunted by the past – the footprints and signs of a previous life are everywhere. The past is something he can't forget, any more than he can change – the past is something he is condemned to repeat. Unlike the protagonists in the reincarnation cycle, if he gets a second shot it will be in this life, and the chances are that once again he'll screw it up – that the economic forces which run this world will be too strong for him and there will be no possibility of metaphysical revenge.

In a crude but telling image, the La Brea Tar Pits stand in for Los Angeles. Someone calls it "the greatest lake of oil on earth. In hot weather animals looking for water could be seen sinking into the tar, their cries would attract predators – animals literally dying to eat another dying animal". As a metaphor for an industry which has mechanised the fabulous, this demands no suspension of disbelief, willing or enforced.

Reincarnation might indeed be a comforting belief system for an industry desperate in its search for the kind of fable which can generate a sequel

The young ones

Peter Biskind

Will Santa fill Hollywood's stockings with box office goodies this Christmas? The studios are hoping so, because 1991 has been a famously bad year, with a weak summer followed by a weaker fall. Several late summer and autumn failures have already affected the development slate of at least one of the studios, Paramount. *Regarding Henry*, *Soapdish* and *Butcher's Wife* all did poorly, but the biggest disappointment was *Frankie and Johnny*. It had two big stars, Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer, cost about \$30 million, but after weeks of release had grossed only \$13 million.

All these movies were aimed at older audiences, and for Paramount chairman, Brandon Tartikoff, the lesson is clear. "While there is a place for the adult film, or for pictures that don't necessarily have to be made for the most frequent moviegoers - twenty-five and under - you don't want an abundance of pictures clearly tilted to viewers twenty-five and up. In a recession, the people most affected will be the least frequent moviegoers - the older audience". Tartikoff refers fondly to films like *Saturday Night Fever*, *Footloose* and *Ghost* as examples of the kinds of movies Paramount will be green-lighting.

The Christmas schedule is filled with the kinds of post-fetally-skewed dinosaurs that Tartikoff is lopping off his slate. But the one movie everyone is betting on to be a solid, across-the-board, young-and-old-alike crowd pleaser is *Hook*, from Tristar. This should be Steven Spielberg doing what he does best. After all, he is Peter Pan, and if he can't make this story into a gigantic hit, well... Although at this writing nobody has seen the film, word is that Spielberg gave stars Dustin Hoffman and Robin Williams a lot of room to fool around, and they, at least, had a good time making it. The picture also features what's her name, Julia Roberts, as Tinker Bell.

Hook had better be a hit, since it cost over \$75 million. And reportedly the stars (Spielberg included) are "participating" in so much profit that the picture will have to gross over \$200 million before any money trickles back to the studio coffers. Tristar head Mike Medavoy denies that the deal is so sweet for the talent, and says that the studio can begin to take profits when the grosses reach \$50 million and continue to the \$120 million mark.

Tristar is also releasing *Bugsy*, a moderately budgeted movie (\$31 million) starring Warren Beatty and Annette Bening and directed by Barry Levinson. The story of the rise and fall of Benjamin Siegel, *Bugsy* should be a hit. It features Oscar-calibre performances by Beatty and Bening; a slick, expensive period look; and a riveting, unconventional script by Jim Toback that pushes the sadosexual envelope to a degree unprecedented in mainstream movies. *Bugsy* is aimed at the dreaded

older audience, but the glamour, violence and quality of the movie should guarantee it a big piece of the box office pie, unless too many viewers find its theatre of cruelty too transgressive.

Fox thinks it has a winner in *For the Boys*, an old-fashioned, backstage epic directed by Mark Rydell and starring Bette Midler and James Caan as USO entertainers who become 50s TV stars and play out their love/hate relationship through the period of the blacklist, Vietnam and beyond. It tested so well that Fox moved up the release date.

Disney has three releases: *Billy Bathgate*, an adult film based on E. L. Doctorow's novel and starring Dustin Hoffman; *Beauty and the Beast*, an animated feature in the classic manner; and *Father of the Bride*, a remake of the post-war hit starring Steve Martin, Diane Keaton and Martin Short.

Billy Bathgate shows that trouble on the set doesn't necessarily mean trouble on the screen. A complicated set of disagreements apparently left Hoffman speaking neither to Disney head Jeffrey Katzenberg, nor to director Robert Benton, but nevertheless, *Billy Bathgate* is an interesting, if small movie. The script, by Tom Stoppard, is literate and funny, Hoffman is excellent as the psychotic Schultz, and Loren Dean and Nicole Kidman are fine in supporting roles. Disney won't see any profit for a long time, but it should make hay with *Beauty and the Beast*. And *Father of the Bride* could well be a hit too.

Universal should be able to take Martin Scorsese's *Cape Fear* to the bank. Clever and funny, it is so terrifying it makes *Silence of the Lambs* look like *Mary Poppins*. The performances - Robert De Niro, Jessica Lange, Nick Nolte and Juliet Lewis - are uniformly excellent, with a scene between De Niro, playing one of the season's gaggle of psychos, and Juliet Lewis as an awkward teenager on the brink of sexual awakening, that must rank as one of the most brilliant and disturbing pieces of film anywhere, anytime. *Cape Fear* should attract older audiences and cross over to repeat-viewing teenagers, since it is a good date picture, although, like *Bugsy*, it will undoubtedly repel the squeamish.

Universal is also going up against Disney with the other big animated Christmas kids' movie: *An American Tale: Fievel Goes West*. This is the first release from Spielberg's new Amblimation outfit (this time without Don Bluth), a sequel that follows the little immigrant mouse on his adventures on the frontier.

From Paramount, we can expect the much ballyhooed *Addam's Family*, which the studio acquired from the ailing Orion. Starring Anjelica Huston as Morticia, Raul Julia as Gomez, and Christopher Lloyd as Uncle Fester, it is a big screen version of the television show. Barry Sonnenfeld, the Coen brothers' cinematographer, makes his directing debut. Early word is mixed.

While there is a place for the adult film, you don't want an abundance of films clearly tilted to viewers twenty-five and up

Also from Paramount is *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, bringing back the old gang for (hopefully) one last trip on the Enterprise. Nick Meyer, who directed *Star Trek II* to good advantage, directs.

Columbia thinks it has a hit with *Prince of Tides*, god knows why. Directed by Barbra Streisand, co-produced by Barbra Streisand and starring Barbra Streisand, this film is about Barbra Streisand - lit well, sexually desirable, ordering food in French, wearing nice clothes. (Rumour has it that a scene in which she teaches Nick Nolte French - in bed, yet - was hooted off the screen at previews and cut from the picture.) Based on a fervent, overwritten book by Pat Conroy, it has been turned into a fervent, overwritten movie.

Warner Brothers has the season's big wild card: *JFK*. Wildly controversial even before it has appeared, having been bludgeoned in the pages of no lesser lights of opinion than *Time* magazine and the *Washington Post*, Oliver Stone's film is an attempt to get to the canker at the heart of American politics: the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Stone believes Kennedy was killed by a cabal of high-ranking military officers and others in the US Government because he planned to wind down the war in Vietnam. He sees his story as a Capraesque tale based on the struggle of then New Orleans DA Jim Garrison to bring to justice a man named Clay Shaw. The film features an array of stars, with Kevin Costner as Jim Garrison and Gary Oldman perfectly cast as Lee Harvey Oswald, as well as Sissy Spacek, Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, Ed Asner, Tommy Lee Jones, Brian Doyle Murray, and so on.

And last but not least, Cronenberg does Burroughs. *Naked Lunch* is a curiosity from Fox, the studio that brought us that *Barton Fink* feeling and seems determined not to fall into the Tartikoff black hole. Any picture with Judy Davis can't be all bad, especially when she's shooting up bug poison into her breast in (nearly) the first shot. Peter Weller is pretty good too as the Burroughs-like exterminator-cum-writer. A Kafka high, as someone says.



'Billy Bathgate': a rare adult treat among the Christmas films



From 'Taxi Driver' on, broken families and abused but undefeated women have been the subjects of the films of Jodie Foster, argues B. Ruby Rich



Always in front of the camera: Jodie Foster as Iris in 'Taxi Driver', left

Nobody's handmaid

● The iconographic significance of Jodie Foster as 'persona Americana' cannot be overstated. It is not simply that, at the age of twenty-nine, she has already had a career longer than many actors twice or thrice her age, in the process winning the loyalty that child actors inspire when they last. It is not just that, with the release of her debut feature *Little Man Tate* she has made the transition to directing that eludes many of her peers (and many of her gender). And it's not merely that the singular drama of her college years, in which a madman mistook the movies for life and used her as an excuse for political violence, has hopelessly confounded the filmic and extrafilmic for a nation of spectators. In the process the overidentification by the American public, the fandom raised to the level of obsession and idolatry, have as much to say about the power of movies as they do about the nature of acting – or, for that matter, about the articulation of the female in cinema.

Graduating from an entertainment industry that had been rescued for posterity by auteurist arguments of its artfulness, US cinema in the 70s responded to social change and to the French New Wave by initiating a kind of film-making that was more self-conscious about both its cinematic strategies and its home-grown subject matter. If Foster's presence came to suggest a different kind of film-making (as in the early Scorsese films), she also quickly came to represent a different kind of woman, too.

"[Jodie] was never a traditional-looking girl. And I think that has a lot to do with her success. It was just at the beginning of women's lib-

eration, and she kind of personified that in a child. She had a strength and uncoquettishness. Maybe it comes from being raised without a father to say, "Turn around and show Daddy how pretty you look!" Evelyn Foster, Jodie's mother (interview by Linda Miller, *American Film*, 1988).

Not daddy's girl

Jodie Foster grew up in the movies. She was in basic training for celluloid from the time she was born; actually, even before. The publicity machine is full of stories: how she was already present in the womb when her film-publicist mother appeared in divorce court, made her first appearance at age three after falling into her brother's Coppertone television commercial try-out, nearly didn't survive her first film appearance (when a co-starring lion attacked her off-screen), contributed her wages to the upkeep of her family of a single mother and four kids, and, finally, was so smart that she became valedictorian of her French-language school and then went on to Yale University. The stuff of legend.

Raised in front of the camera, moving from childhood to adolescence to adulthood all on screen, Jodie Foster grew up as an image. By all rights, by the design of Hollywood, she should have become a predictable commodity as an actress. But she didn't. She didn't turn into the empty vessel that movies like a woman to be, so the director and the audience and the wet-dream critics can fill her up. But she didn't outgrow the movies, either, like so many childhood stars. Since she grew up right inside the image factory, she never had to stand outside

it, trying to get in. No years of high-school plays, straining to look cute or prettier than the other girls.

Jodie Foster was there from the beginning, deep inside, imprinted by Hollywood as surely as Konrad Lorenz's duck. In her case, though, Hollywood functioned as its own immunisation: she became resistant to the artifices of glamour and the siren song of artificial femininity. She became her own woman, instead of theirs, with the unexpected result that women in the audience finally got to see on screen someone whose guts showed on her face.

"A while back I bought some acting books, because I'd started feeling very insecure about not knowing the terminology... So I looked at them, and I realised that most of it was common sense: if you're sitting at a table and it's cold, you're cold; or, if you're supposed to eat something, you actually eat it; if somebody's dead, you're upset. It's all about common sense and human behaviour and paying attention. Ultimately, I think I did probably do a lot of the things that acting classes and acting schools teach, but to me, it was just the way it was supposed to be. I had grown up that way and didn't really know anything else" Jodie Foster (interview with author, Walker Art Center, 1991).

Acting may well be the hardest element to define in film-making, since everyone from critics to directors to fans is eternally confusing the dancer with the dance. Actors who disappear into their characters are always suspect as novelty acts, or disdained as cool technicians pulling off star turns. Those who don't, who instead replicate their screen selves over and over, are dismissed as personalities lacking ▶

◀ in skill, incapable of the craft of acting. On the other hand, actors who capture the attention and affection of the public (often, like Julie Christie or Diane Keaton, in conjunction with a particular historical moment) are forever memorialised, no matter the success of subsequent films or their own frequently ambivalent relationship to the media.

Foster is no exception to these rules. Thrust by talent and circumstance into the stratosphere of public obsession, she has struggled to keep her screen persona in perspective and to continue her lifelong preference for ensemble pieces, for a style of acting more collaborative than narcissistic, and for a kind of performance that might be termed the 'extraordinary ordinary' – a hyperrealism of character that mixes class traits and gender attributes into a singular but vulnerable strength.

The best example is probably her role in *Stealing Home* (1988), a forgotten film in which she gives one of her best performances as a troubled but carefree teenager, determined to have fun and to show the little boy she's annointed as her pal how to enjoy life. Everyone who missed that film had to wait until *Thelma and Louise* (1991) to see a woman drive a car or mouth off in quite this way. With movie sophistication, she instructs the boy how to smoke, how to look sexy for girls, and how to have an innocent kind of hellraisin' fun. In the process, Foster manages to fine-tune her trademark persona. She's sexy and confident, smart and brash, seemingly golden, but with tragedy waiting in the wings. The pattern would hold through a lot of films. She's never a dutiful daughter, never daddy's girl nor the apple of mommy's eye. In fact, she's almost never in a family at all.

The family is where little girls are made. In Foster's case, the family that Hollywood created for her is particularly striking. She wasn't given a nuclear family like so many other celluloid girls. No, from the start, her families are fractured – and when not fractured, dysfunctional. In film after film, she plays a girl with an absent dad, missing mom, hated parent, or a divorce survivor, or even an orphan. Today, Foster acknowledges that, since her mother picked her parts in those days, she very well may have responded to scripts that mirrored their own family portrait. Whatever the reason, the independence of the Foster character was usually matched by a narratively enforced self-sufficiency.

There are exceptions, of course: films in which Foster is contained within a traditional nuclear family. When the sexuality that inflects the Foster persona through most of her career meets up with a family context, however, the result is usually Oedipal perversity – most often played for laughs in an attempt at defusion. In an odd Disney vehicle, *Freaky Friday* (1976), she and her mom get to do a mind-body switch and the whole audience gets to hold its breath while the movie tiptoes around Daddy's game responses to the wife who now calls him 'daddy' and daughter who now calls him 'Bill'. This being Disney, we reach the end without

full Oedipal rupture. In *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1984), however, there is no such restraint. The family goes nuclear. By the time the movie ends, mommy is dead, daddy is blinded, and Foster's Frannie has gone to bed with a woman in a bear suit (played by Nastassja Kinski) and her own brother (none other than Rob Lowe).

Taking care of herself

Foster grew up at a moment in US history when the notion of home as a sanctuary retreated into nostalgia (at least for the white middle class, since Latino and African-American families continued to hold their own). Girls were leaving home all over the country, and 'bad girls', the kind that Foster so often played, were moving out fast. If the nuclear family was dangerous, a truth hammered home throughout the 70s, then the world outside wasn't exactly safe, either. Certainly not for women.

"If I portray a victim, does that mean I'm not Wonder Woman? Well, I'm not trying to be. There are a lot of ugly things in our [women's] history, as in black history – and the truth has to be told. You can't censor art through political 'correctness'" Jodie Foster (interview by Dan Yakir, *Interview*, 1987).

To be sure, Jodie Foster does play characters who are abused, manipulated, pimped, set up, raped or nearly raped, even killed. However often she may be victimised, though, she never plays the victim. She brings bravado to her performances and prevents the demolition of her characters' subjectivity. Never submissive, she may be threatened or even overpowered, but always fights back, defends herself, gets even. However vulnerable at the level of the body, every Foster character is smart and tough and determined to prevail in the end. And bad things (jail, rejection, death) happen to the men who defile or humiliate her.

Foster never quite fits the damsel-in-distress role, even when the early scripts require her rescue. She always tries taking care of herself first, and sometimes even succeeds. As her filmography progresses and the actress Jodie Foster ages, her characters begin to act increasingly in their own self-defence, casting the damsel aside entirely. Sometimes, this is due to the script. But at other times, it's clear that the Foster persona has influenced the character far beyond the narrative's requirements.

In *Five Corners* (1977), which tries hard to be an American art film, she plays a character who goes down swinging, literally whacking her psycho pursuer with a board and knocking him flat, scoring a momentary victory. If he catches up with her later, well, it takes a whole townful of men to save her – no single man, neither sweetheart nor cop, can do it. Films like these decisively overturned the structuring presence of the male protector that used to characterise the action movie. As a result, a space opened up, extending even to mainstream genre films, wherein Jodie Foster could come of age, not merely alongside her characters, but fully in step with them.

The release of *The Accused*, virtually simultaneously with *Five Corners*, showed the new

shape of gender relations: here, men are the problem, no longer the solution. Foster's Sarah Tobias character looks across class, not gender, for a saviour and finds her in the person of a yuppie woman DA who takes on her rape case as a routine assignment. Even with a woman on her side, though – partially as a result of the class divide and partially due to the injustice of the legal system – the Jodie Foster character realises that she has to help herself. She may be dependent on another woman professionally (legally), but first she has to fight back, literally on her own.

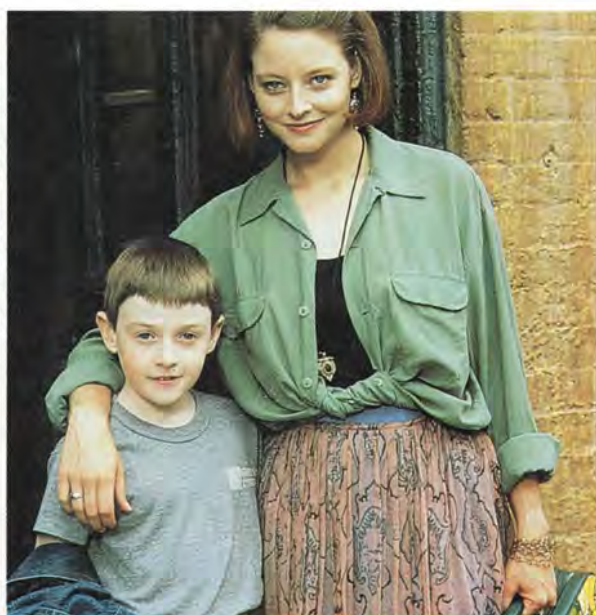
Foster's portrayal of Sarah Tobias as a working-class woman picked up on a strain already present in earlier Foster performances and made it official, setting the tone followed by both her subsequent screen roles: the spunky proletariat gal who can take on anyone from a posse of rapists to a psycho killer to a manipulative genius. In *The Accused*, whether she's invading her attorney's dinner party and lashing her with anger or physically fending off an attack by one of the rape witnesses by destroying his truck with her car, Tobias rejects any hint of victimisation. It is only when she is immobilised in a hospital room, with the DA playing a classic bedside scene, that Jodie Foster as Sarah Tobias is willing to let down her guard and to speak the kind of lines that could have run as a postscript to *Taxi Driver*: "I never got to tell nobody nothing. You did all my talking for me". Sarah wants to defend herself, not just with action but with law; as a surviving victim, she wants to bear witness – an impulse that any reader who watched even a fraction of the televised Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings can certainly understand.

Dancing in the dark

To think about Foster in *The Accused* is also, inevitably, to think about Foster's sexuality and the sexualised roles she has played since her earliest appearances, from the hooker-child in *Taxi Driver* to the femme fatale in *Hotel New Hampshire*. Strikingly, Foster has avoided the trade-off so common for women in Hollywood cinema, whereby actresses trade intelligence or strength for sexual appeal on screen. Foster gave up nothing, held on to it all, as a child, adolescent, and adult actress. The very fact of her sexuality (one that appeals to audiences across all kinds of generational, gender, and national boundaries, unifying her publics in a commonality of desire) is fused to her obvious personal authority, to create a fascinating tension, one that says as much about gender definition in late twentieth-century America as about her own career.

The child-sex frisson of her early roles indelibly marked Foster. In *Taxi Driver* (1976), she plays Iris as someone who's still a kid, adulthood pasted on to her like a cheap disguise, with her sexuality a commodity produced in her by adult men, for adult men. It's the shock of the disjunction – a child, sexualised, in an adult's world – that provides the tone of perversity. In *Bugsy Malone*, released the same year, the assignment of sexuality to Fos-

Faces of Foster: in 'Bugsy Malone', right; in her debut as director, 'Little Man Tate', far right; with Rob Lowe in 'Hotel New Hampshire', below



Powers of resistance: in 'The Accused', far left, and 'The Silence of the Lambs', left

ter has the opposite effect: it marks her as an adult in a world of children. Her expert integration of herself with the role of Tallulah, a worldweary and seductive gangster's moll, sets her apart from the world of children she inhabits and results in an inversion of the very perversity that Iris was marketing. Seen together, the films present an explicit critique of sexuality as a fixed element, demonstrating instead its variable nature. Sexuality, as attached to the Foster persona, moves across the pair of films like a floating signifier, cut adrift, shifting position like a word that means two very different things in two different languages.

Ever since, Foster's sexuality has been overdetermined. Certainly, female sexuality is always a double-edged sword, with power (and who's got it) hanging in the balance. And nowhere is this truer than in the movies. Foster presents us with characters who are strong-willed, not weak; active, not passive; direct, not coy; openly sexual, not repressed or puritanical. Of course, the parts are written by the screenwriter and not by her. But by now, if not actually scripted with her in mind, they are certainly transformed by her enactments. The change of sexuality makes these tough characters vulnerable, while giving them the strength to sustain that vulnerability. *The Accused* made this shatteringly clear. By now, the scene of gang rape on a barroom pinball machine has been described over and over, until it has gathered a totemic significance equal to that of the original rape, perpetrated in an actual bar in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1983. But the scene of the rape, to my mind, is not the central traumatic event

of the film, despite the unanimity of statements on the matter. Any viewer of the film today can notice, as Foster has pointed out, that the more fraught moment takes place before the rape, when Foster as Sarah Tobias flirts drunkenly in the bar and does her long sexy solo around the dance floor.

It is in this moment that *The Accused* becomes a metaphor for a woman's place, in cinema as in the world. Foster dances, and we see Sarah enjoying and indulging her own sense of self and sexuality, confident, projecting at once control and abandon. But the dance is played out under the sign of the tavern, a male gathering-place, where the presentation of a female self is subsumed, first by a voyeurism that strips away her autonomy, and then by an invasion that transgresses the boundaries of passive voyeurism. The public display of a private self is an act of risk for a woman, and in this film, it's a risk with frightful consequence.

The male possession of public space is not limited to the tavern; cinemas, too, constitute a regime of power in which the viewer can assume ownership over that which he views and feel proprietary towards a female body captured only by his gaze. Sarah Tobias dancing in that bar becomes a metaphor for every actress performing on screen, for every woman sitting in the darkened cinema watching a dress rehearsal of her own conceivable fate. Foster's ability to embody in her characters the 'extraordinary ordinary' renews the pact of identification with her audience. The victory of the trial scene resonates beyond the film to claim, for Foster as for all of us, the right of a

woman to the expression of a self-determined sexuality, free of punishment or invasion.

The Silence of the Lambs (1991) upped the ante: women were sought not for their sexuality but simply – literally – for their bodies, the killer's drive for possession stripped of any sexual impulse whatsoever. Buffalo Bill was just collecting skins. In the climactic scene, in which Foster's Agent Starling hunts the killer, only to become the prey, Buffalo Bill's use of infra-red glasses turns the drama in a peculiarly self-reflexive direction. Vision and the act of looking are the stuff of which movies are made; when that act is foregrounded, something's always up. Though the shot is the only one in the film to structure Clarice as victim, the point-of-view shot is not lined up with the audience's position of identification. Instead, it is here that Foster gets to reverse the outcome of the barroom scene in *The Accused* by turning the tables on the killer, however improbably, and taking the audience with her. She may still be on view, may still be subject to the consuming gaze of the powerful male – this time a murderer with no intent to rape – but the deck is not stacked. Here, she can win, saving not only herself in the process but also the girl, trapped and panicked, screaming out "help me" from the bottom of a well. Who does she represent? Every actress done for by a killer in a horror movie? Every woman assaulted? You? Me? Foster herself in other movies?

Infra-red vision or not, Clarice Starling seems to demonstrate that there are some male gazes – and male acts – that are not permissible and will not be tolerated. Significantly, director Jonathan Demme purged the horror genre that had been the favourite boy-toy of the 80s by rigorously desexualising the violence in *The Silence of the Lambs* and ensuring that Foster's character would face only death, not defilement. The movie offered a new kind of female hero, one whose vulnerability and emotions were seen as aid rather than impediment, one who could avenge an entire decade's genre sins in a single act.

A sinister prize

"Obviously I wouldn't do softcore porn – it doesn't interest me. Nor do all those boys' films that have two minutes' worth of girl interest... I wouldn't do anything regressive or repressive or that advocates an old moral regime" Jodie Foster (interview by Dan Yakir, *Interview*, 1987).

And she hasn't. But 1991 was a year in which she was taken to task as though she had. The paradox is worth examining. Even before *Silence* opened in the US on Valentine's Day, it was being denounced in the gay press as a work of pernicious homophobia for its Buffalo Bill portrayal. Foster was also being praised, in mainstream circles, for her strongest performance ever, with Oscar nominations frequently mentioned (though Foster always ruled them out). She graced the covers of magazines from *Mirabella* to the *New York Times* magazine. But the controversy soon took over. Sides were drawn, and you had to pick one or the other. Critics were polled. Director Jonathan ►

◀ Demme was occasionally targeted for abuse. Actor Ted Levine, who'd played the Jame Gumb character, was rarely mentioned. The full force of wrath descended, instead, on Jodie Foster herself. Was this star-fucking gone awry? Misogyny? Scapegoating? She was just an actress, playing another character. Simultaneously, a campaign gathered momentum, aimed at forcing Foster to break her prohibition on discussing her personal life and relationships. The campaign turned her life and career into a sinister prize in a new contest of so-called 'outing' that seemed more intent on gathering this private woman's skin for a trophy than even Buffalo Bill had been. A mere decade after the Hinckley debacle, Jodie Foster was once again a public target.

Why? Or, as Foster herself had put it, writing in *Esquire* in 1982 about the hideous Hinckley episode: "Why me?" For a complete answer, it's necessary to look at the autumn of 1991 as well, when Foster made her directorial debut with *Little Man Tate*, the story of a boy genius torn between nature and culture, between his simple emotional mom (Foster) and his emotionally crippled mentor (Dianne West). It is a modest and competent movie, full of feeling but less adventurous than many films in which Foster has starred. But never mind that. Look at the reaction. First out of the gate was *Interview* magazine, playing Foster on the cover in a pose that couldn't help but recall certain Dorothy Arzner poses. Foster was positioned between the giant shadow figures of motion-picture cameras, the actress now emblematically the director. Soon enough, though, *Time* magazine took over, splashing Foster on the cover under a banner headline that trumpeted: "A Director is Born". The article fell all over itself with superlatives, comparing Foster to Louis Malle and then quoting Malle's own praise of her as proof positive. What was notable in the article, above all, was the critic's clear confusion of Foster with her characters while a child actor and the projection of this fantasy displacement on to the woman director and her film product.

Jodie Foster, throughout her career, has been the repository of audience fantasies. The very nature of her persona has permitted the co-existence of contradictory projections on the part of her diverse publics. The heavily

cathectic adoration on the part of these publics, alternating recently between idolatry and demonisation, is itself a product of the unprecedented position which Foster occupies in the twin worlds of public and private discourse, pointing to the possible irreconcilability of these discourses.

Her mother traced Foster's early success to the rise of a women's liberation movement and the demand for a new kind of girl-child. What has happened, of course, is that the girl-child grew up. The sexuality that was such a frisson in the girl became a more threatening and potent quality in the woman. *The Accused* is a key moment in her career, then, not only for the reasons already cited, not only for the Oscar that crowned her comeback, but also for the break with sexuality that her character makes within the movie: kicking out her boyfriend, cutting her hair, cleaning up her act. Narratively, these acts are linked to her reaction to rape and the consequent need to testify.

Authority and surrender

In the larger narrative of the Foster career, however, what comes next is most relevant. What came next was *The Silence of the Lambs*, which, in desexualising violence for women, also desexualised the Foster character of Clarice Starling, removing even the vestiges of sexuality present in the novel. In the round of promotional pieces accompanying the release, director Demme could be heard to say that this was the first time that Jodie Foster had been allowed to show her intelligence on screen. A coincidence? Unlikely. Repetition proves the point. In her new film *Little Man Tate*, Foster the director desexualises Foster the actress just as rigorously, this time in the service of motherhood rather than intelligence.

There's an inevitable rush to judgment. Has the tension that always existed in the Foster persona, that of sexuality combined with authority, reached its breaking point? In times of intense political repression such as now, perhaps sexuality loses its liberatory potential, perhaps women's sexuality does indeed carry as much danger as it does pleasure. Further, with a move into the directing chair, Jodie Foster the director may feel that the sexuality of her actress persona is a luxury she can no

longer afford, as she begins to uncover the contradictions between these two cinematic roles of absolute authority and negotiated surrender. Finally, however, there's a different conclusion. Speaking at the Walker Art Center earlier this year, Foster proclaimed herself ready to take on a new kind of role as an actress: "I believe women should be sexual. And why not? What a great thing to be: a sexual woman, coming of age and discovering sensuality and the intoxication of it. I've seen so many movies about women who don't like sex and really don't want to have sex, or have that posey stuff in the Calvin Klein ads. Well, that's just not true and I'm sick of that myth being out there. What I'd like to do is develop movies that better reflect my generation of women".

Foster's younger sexual personae were all about promise, potential, conflicted desire, or – most often – about being the locus of someone else's desire. It may be that the current desexualisation is a pause, not an end. It may be that Jodie Foster, whose position in the world owes so much to her perpetual willingness to take big risks, is preparing for the biggest risk of all: the gamble to fuse an active female sexuality with an equally active female authority. It may be that Foster the actor had to wait for Foster the director to emerge in order for this movie to be made. What it might look like is anybody's guess. Whether the public and private worlds of agency and fantasy can tolerate wholeness in one of the culture's most contested figures is equally the stuff of prophecy. The girl-child is a relatively unconflicted locus of desire. Grown up and suitably sexualised, she's a different story altogether. The wrath traditionally directed at the phallic mother is ever-present, as is the insatiable desire to consume entirely the adored object, while identification does its perpetual dance between self and other, seeking a stable position from which to gaze. It may well be that Jodie Foster, as director and actor, is facing a problem for which the culture that has produced and reproduced her as icon has found no solution.

The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, kindly gave us access to their catalogue, 'Jodie Foster: Growing Up on Screen', with an essay by B. Ruby Rich. A season of Jodie Foster films begins at the National Film Theatre in January 1992

Filmography

Jodie Foster

born 19 November 1962,
Los Angeles

Napoleon and Samantha

91 mins (Bernard McEveety, 1972)

Kansas City Border

99 mins (Jerrold Freedman, 1972)

Tom Sawyer

103 mins (Don Taylor, 1973)

One Little Indian

91 mins (Bernard McEveety, 1973)

Alice Doesn't Live Here

Anymore 112 mins (Martin Scorsese, 1974)

Echoes of a Summer

(aka *The Last Castle*) 98 mins (Don Taylor, 1975)

Taxi Driver

114 mins (Martin Scorsese, 1976)

Bugsy Malone

93 mins (Alan Parker, 1976)

Freaky Friday

100 mins (Gary Nelson, 1976)

The Little Girl Who Lives

Down the Lane 94 mins (Nicolas Gessner, 1976)

Candleshoe

101 mins (Norman Tokar, 1977)

Moi, fleur bleue (aka Stop

Calling Me Baby!) 98 mins (Eric Le Hung, 1977)

Il casotto

114 mins (Sergio Citti, 1977)

Foxes

105 mins (Adrian Lyne, 1979)

Carry On

106 mins (Robert Kaylor, 1980)

O'Hara's Wife

87 mins (William Bartman, 1982)

The Blood of Others

(*Les Sang des autres*) 270 mins (Claude Chabrol, 1984)

The Hotel New Hampshire

108 mins (Tony Richardson, 1984)

Siesta

97 mins (Mary Lambert, 1987)

Five Corners

94 mins (Tony Bill, 1987)

Mesmerized

(unreleased, Michael Laughlin, 1988)

Stealing Home

98 mins (Steven Kampmann, 1988)

The Accused

111 mins (Jonathan Kaplan, 1988)

Catchfire

79 mins (US title *Backtrack*, Alan Smith aka Dennis Hopper, 1989)

The Silence of the Lambs

118 mins (Jonathan Demme, 1991)

Little Man Tate

(Jodie Foster, 1991)

Television Series

Mayberry R.F.D.

(1969, 1970)

The Courtship of Eddie's

Father (1969, 1970, 1971)

Gunsmoke

(1969, 1971, 1972)

Julia

(1969)

My Three Sons

(1971)

Ironsides

(1972)

Bonanza

(1972)

Ghost Story

(1972)

My Sister, Hank

(1972)

The Paul Lynde Show

(1972)

The Amazing Chan and

the Chan Clan (animated, 1972-1974)

The Partridge Family

(1973)

Kung Fu

(1973)

The New Adventures of Perry

Mason (1973)

Love Story

(1973)

Bob and Carol and Ted and

Alice (regular cast, 1973)

Paper Moon

(regular cast, 1974)

Medical Center

(1975)

Television Movies

Menace of the Mountain

(1973)

Smile, Jenny, You're Dead

(1974)

Svengali

(1983)

ABC Afterschool Specials

Rookie of the Year

(1973)

Alexander

(1973)

The Secret Life of T. K.

Dearing (1975)

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Time Out

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Daily News

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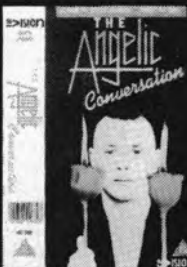
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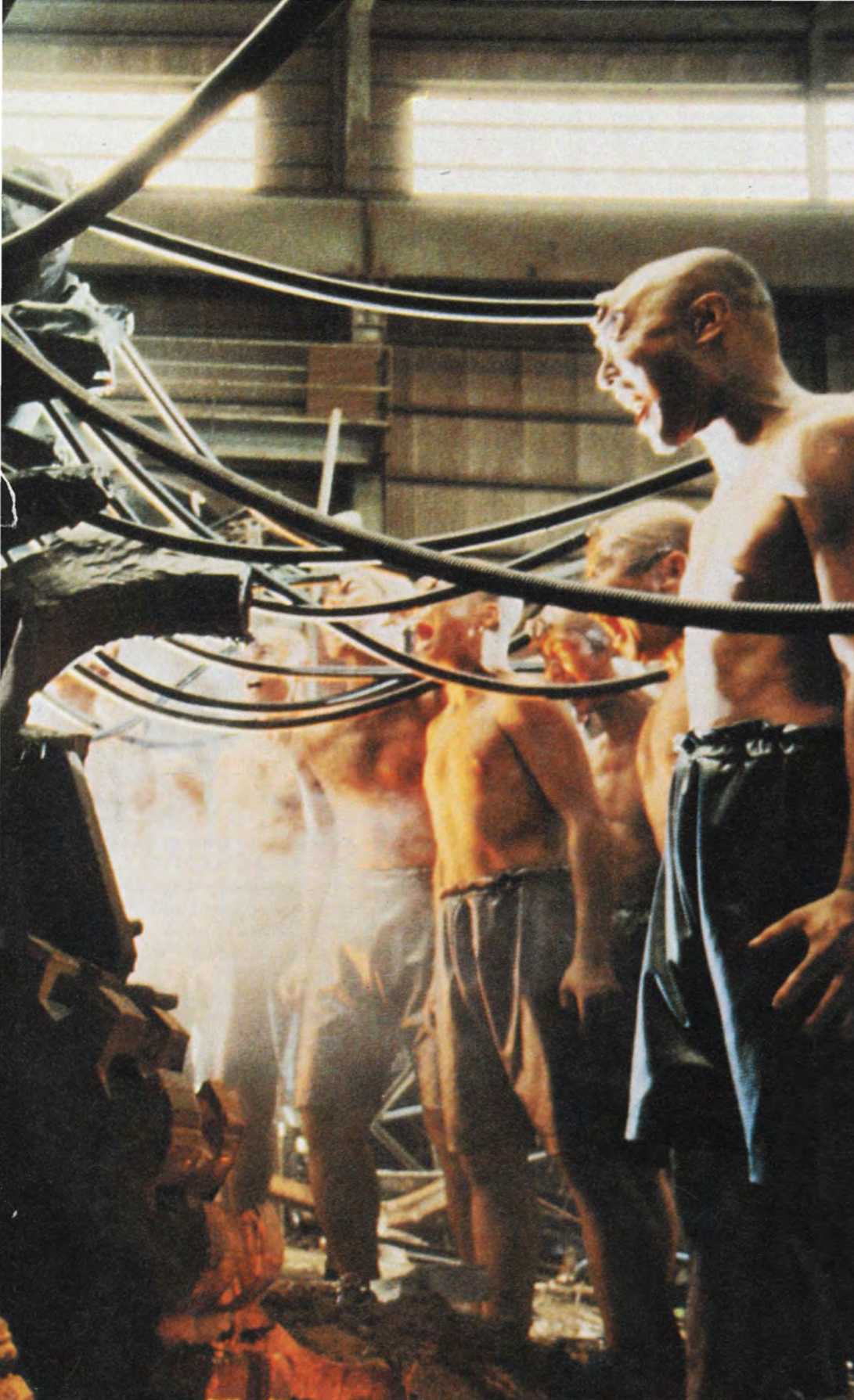
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Tokyo

stories

Japanese cinema flourishes, argues Tony Rayns,



● I caught the new Arnold Schwarzenegger short the other evening, the one where he plays the cowardly wimp who ditches his girl and runs from a gang of muggers, but then gains strength and courage (Popeye-style) by knocking back a bottle of health drink. That's right, it's a current ad on Japanese television. What seems unthinkable (or at least unaffordable) everywhere else is routine in Japan: Hollywood stars are queueing up to plug products. Jodie Foster and Bruce Willis sell cars, while Richard Gere belts out Bob Marley's 'No Woman, No Cry' to promote JAL. The funniest thing about this is that these Western 'names' are being paid to sell Japanese products and services to the Japanese. To match this, we'd need Takakura Ken popping up on NBC to tell the mid-West that he drives a Ford, or Kitano Takeshi on LWT nipping into a Chelsea local for a pint of Ruddles.

Aside from demonstrating in the most naked way that Japanese corporations can buy whoever and whatever they want, these ads faithfully reflect the prevailing market conditions in Japan. The movies making money in Tokyo are *Terminator 2*, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* and *Three Men and a Little Lady*; even *Hudson Hawk* seems to be finding a niche. There may not be much shelf space in Japanese shops for imported foods and consumer durables, but imported stars are the ones who sell cinema tickets – along with cars, health drinks and air travel.

The surviving film industry majors – Shochiku, Nikkatsu, Toho, Daiei and Toei – have diversified their activities too shrewdly to be in any danger of collapse, but precious little of their profit these days comes from film production. When they do produce, they stick to their most conservative formulas: anthropomorphic animal movies, Tora-san movies and so on. Ever since Kurosawa made his peace with them (several years ago, around the time that he appeared in ads for Japanese whisky), their idea of 'cultural film-making' has been to splash out on the master's latest folly. This has left the field clear for others to venture into production, which is why so many of the more interesting Japanese movies of the last decade have been financed or co-financed by department stores, publishing houses and music/software conglomerates. The department stores have played an increasingly crucial role (not least by showing offbeat movies in their rooftop auditoria), largely because 'culture' is seen as the last intangible left to lure the product-sated public through their doors.

1991 has been a very good year for Japanese cinema, but almost exclusively at the level of ►

'Tetsuo 2: The Body Hammer', Tsukamoto's follow-up film, where men turn into weapons

as he reports on 'Tetsuo 2', young directors and censorship

◀ low-to-medium budget, independent initiatives. The talented 'new wave' directors of the 80s (Yamakawa Naoto, Nagasaki Shunichi, Ishii Sogo, Riju Go *et al*) have had little success in knocking on industry doors recently, but even newer film-makers have found other ways to finance, distribute and sell their movies. The example of Otomo Katsuhiro is instructive. His triumph with *Akira* made him one of the most bankable of young Japanese artists. But when he decided to make his first live-action feature last year, he took the project not to a major, but to the small independent outfit Embodiment Films, who in turn had no trouble getting Sony to bankroll it. The result, *World Apartment Horror*, is no masterpiece, but it's certainly wittier, more politically acute and more in tune with the real world than, say, Kurosawa's lamentable *Rhapsody in August*. By taking it to an independent, Otomo denied himself a 'wave' release but ensured that he could make exactly the black comedy he wanted to, complete with jibes at the 'horror' of Tokyo property speculation and at Japanese anti-Asian racism.

Otomo, of course, had the international success of *Akira* to coast on, but other newcomers have done at least as well with very different track records behind them. Iwamoto Kenchi, for instance, made a 'cult' name for himself between 1985 and 1989 as the author of 'underground' manga like *Tranquilliser* and *Diary of a Student*, but left the field abruptly two years ago to make films instead. He set up his independent company, Vortex Japan, with backing from the young restaurateur, Ohi Shuichi (Iwamoto likens him to a Renaissance patron), and completed his debut feature, *Kikuchi*, in the summer of 1990. But he didn't show it to anyone in Japan, looking instead for a platform to launch the film internationally. He found what he needed in the Berlin Film Festival's Forum of Young Cinema; when *Kikuchi* was premiered there last February, a jury that included Susan Sontag awarded it the Wolfgang Staudte Prize, a happy combination of prestige and Deutschmarks. Armed with this, Iwamoto has lined up distribution deals in Britain and the US, and is only now preparing to open the film in Tokyo. It will play – on the top floor of a Shibuya department store, of course – from mid-November, almost eighteen months after it was made. Ohi's patronage gave Iwamoto the luxury of taking his time over publicity, promotion, a domestic exhibition deal and foreign sales. None of the majors handles its products with as much creative and business flair as this.

Vortex Japan, when I visit it, turns out to be an unostentatious single room in the hip suburb of Shimo-Kitazawa, six stops from Shinjuku on the Odakyu line. Iwamoto himself, a likeably eccentric figure with a monkish haircut, heads a small team of dedicated staff members, all of whom are currently busy in various ways ensuring that the opening of *Kikuchi* will be an event. Iwamoto is thinking about his next film, but doesn't intend to monopolise the Vortex output; he explains that he sees the company as "a challenge to the conventional production-line system of making films" and wants it to invent new methods of production as it promotes films by new talents. Both his ideals and his *modus operandi* strike me as eminently sensible: a model

for other young independents, and not only those in Japan.

Kikuchi himself, the hapless protagonist of Iwamoto's film, shares his lonely room with a broken-down television set and ventures out at night to peer into the apartment of the girl from the supermarket check-out. He comes to mind when I meet Mochizuki Rokuro, a prolific thirty-three-year-old director of porno videos who also heads his own small independent company. Mochizuki is much concerned with the identity of his customers, the lonely young men who rent (or even occasionally buy) 'adult videos'. Most of them, he thinks, are victims either of the new materialism (young Japanese women nowadays prefer older and wealthier men), or of the new technocracy ('silicone valley' developments like Tsukuba are populated almost entirely by single men).

Mochizuki has no illusions about the quantity or quality of relief that his videos (most of them made in forty-eight hours) can provide, but he does see his output as an important alternative to the lure of new religions like the self-styled Science of Happiness, a Scientology-like outfit that already claims 1.7 million adherents and expects to have 10 million by July 1992. Appalled by the organisations's Nuremberg-style rallies, Mochizuki hopes that his videos encourage their viewers to aim for one-to-one contacts rather than surrendering to membership of quasi-totalitarian groups. He tries to achieve this by showing his characters talking to each other between the obligatory episodes of fucking.

As it happens, Mochizuki Rokuro has just made one of the best Japanese features of the year, financed off the back of his video output. *Skinless Night* is a funny/serious movie about the plight of a porno-video director who gets it into his head that he wants to make a 'real' film. Kayama's average day might include a shopping trip to a rubberwear boutique, a child-minding stint in the office and a gruelling afternoon shooting porn in a hotel room, struggling with the special effects for the 'golden shower' scene. His long-dormant idealism is reawakened by his chance discovery of a short he made as a student, and he takes himself off to the hot-spring resort where Kawabata Yasunari wrote *The Izu Dancer*, the perfect spot to write a soul-searching script. Meanwhile, his financier rejects the project, his crew see bankruptcy looming and his wife thinks he's making a terrible mistake.

Several well-known Japanese directors born in the baby boom of the early 50s got their first break in the film industry working on porno

movies, many for the major Nikkatsu, which used to operate policies rather like Roger Corman's at New World. But Mochizuki, like his protagonist Kayama, came slightly too late to benefit from that route into film-making: porno-movie production died quietly in the early 80s, as consumers switched to the more solitary pleasures of watching rented tapes. It makes no sense economically or any other way to produce ambitious tapes, but Mochizuki assures me that there are plenty of other budding auteurs currently slaving away in the same game. He founded his company E-Staff Union in 1985, and still directs and/or writes some thirty tapes a year to keep it ticking over. He husbanded his resources until he was ready to make *Skinless Night*, and now plans to go on using his core business to underwrite more ambitious movies. The next E-Staff production will be directed by one of his assistants (a young guy who already has his script ready) and others will follow.

Mochizuki's own next film will centre on the phenomenon of compulsive gambling, but he remains fascinated by the workings of the porno subculture and plans a future project on the men who 'act' in porno videos. What, he wonders, makes them want to do it? It isn't the pay (much less than the crew's, and very much less than their female counterparts) and it isn't the prospect of moving on to 'respectable' acting (which is non-existent). It isn't even the narcissistic thrill of seeing themselves displayed in all their glory, since Japan's voluntary censorship code prohibits the depiction of genitals, aroused or otherwise. The self-censorship of pornography generally takes the form of partial 'scrambling' of the video image, but Mochizuki also uses another technique that must make 'performance' more difficult than it would otherwise be: he shines an intense light on the genitals during sexual intercourse, so that the erogenous zones bleach to white.

The other independent film-maker I have tracked down in the last few weeks in Tokyo is Tsukamoto Shinya, whose extraordinary and alarming *Tetsuo* has recently reached British distribution. I find *Tetsuo* remarkable for its mixture of knowing schlock and avant-garde poetry (unmatched in contemporary movies except perhaps by Todd Haynes' *Poison*), and I was eager to find out what kind of sensibility produced something so extreme and convulsive. In the event, Tsukamoto turned out to be even more of a puzzle than his film: a regular guy in a woolly hat who declares himself inspired more by Kurosawa's *Living* than by Toho monster movies.

Tetsuo attracted more attention than no-budget independent movies usually do in Japan, and Tsukamoto found himself showered with offers to direct horror movies for the majors – all of which he turned down. The offer he accepted was to make a reputedly strange fantasy film for Shochiku: *Hiruko the Goblin*, starring Japan's answer to David Bowie, Sawada Kenji. He says it was an "interesting" experience, but he's obviously happier working as an independent. The success of *Tetsuo* has enabled him to mount *Tetsuo 2: The Body Hammer* on a much larger budget and in colour, while still producing through his own Kaiju Theatre Company. The new film is already 95 per cent shot, and he shows me three rough-

Mochizuki's 'Skinless Night': a porno-video director who wants to make another kind of film



Tony Rayns reports on the highlights of an outrageously expensive festival

The only interesting question prompted by the Tokyo Film Festival, about to become an annual event after four biennial editions, is: what is its hidden agenda? Not since Imelda Marcos' unlamented Manila Film Festival has an event like this been so blatantly a pretext for something else. Festival head Tokuma Yasuyoshi (the elderly impresario behind Daiei Film Company, Ghibli Animation Studio, Nintendo video-game magazines and much else) admits to having no particular commitment to or love for movies as such, and his attitude permeates the entire administrative structure. Hardly anyone involved, from the programmers to the eager kids who staff the information desks, has any real perspective on Japanese cinema, let alone world cinema – a shortcoming that results in mediocre programming, inept scheduling, a catalogue with an incredibly high density of errors, a pitifully amateurish *Daily Bulletin* and a lot of spineless diplomatic manoeuvring.

This year's extended party cost some \$7.3 million, making it probably the most expensive indulgence of its kind mounted anywhere. Some of the dosh came from national and local government offices, not usually noted for their patronage of the arts, and some from Japanese distributors, who used the event to launch and promote their forthcoming releases. The rest came from the corporate boardrooms of 'official' Japan.

Why did they cough up? Presumably they share Tokuma's vision: "We consider that Japan should be contributing to the world in future – in the emotional, cultural and social areas worthy of its economic power". On this showing, Japan still has a long way to go. Even its claim to regional pre-eminence is hollow: the much less pretentious Hong Kong Festival (which attracts a huge number of Japanese buyers each spring) combines intelligent programming with a defined sense of its relevance to the local community.

More by accident than design, the Tokyo programme included a handful of outstanding films. Towering above everything else on show (including John Sayles'

City of Hope, awarded the Grand Prix) was Edward Yang's *A Brighter Summer Day* (Guling Jie Shaojian Sha Ren Shijian), a Taiwanese movie billed by the festival as an American/Japanese co-production to avoid upsetting China. Yang's masterly film was screened in a three-hour cut, but also exists in a four-hour version that will reportedly premiere in the Berlin Festival's Forum section next February.

The English title *A Brighter Summer Day*, is taken from the imperfectly heard lyrics of Elvis Presley's 'Are You Lonesome Tonight?', as covered by a Taipei garage band in the summer of 1960. The song resonates through the film in several ways. First, it testifies to the influence of American popular culture and style on Taiwan kids at the time – particularly the kids from lower-middle-class families who fled to Taiwan from Mainland China in the late 40s. Second, it embodies the lure of the United States as a land of milk and honey in the minds of the displaced Mainland parents, who feel no great loyalty to Taiwan itself and want to buy their children a foreign education. Third, it obliquely expresses the misery of Taiwan in the awkward period between the loss of the Mainland to the Communists and the dawn of the island's economic prosperity. Yang shows Taiwan in 1960-61 as a directionless society, powered by corruption, paranoia and a high level of latent aggression.

At the heart of the film's sprawling fresco is a kind of love story. Xiao Si'r, the fourteen-year-old second son of a minor civil servant, develops his first adolescent crush on Ming, a self-possessed girl with a history of involvement in local teenage gangs. The nervous affair draws the boy into the world of vicious gang rivalry and murderous fights, and ends by tearing him apart emotionally. At the same time, his father, a tattered idealist, is taken by the authorities for gruellingly questioning about his links with possible Communist spies. These parallel events anchor the film's sense of a society falling apart at the seams, providing a strong emotional focus without straitjacketing the narrative. The action encompasses an extraordinary range of characters and incidents, but the

thrust of the film's meaning is clear, direct and very moving.

Many viewers in Tokyo drew comparisons between Yang's film and Hou Xiaoxian's *A City of Sadness*, the last major Taiwanese production to deal with a hitherto neglected episode in the island's modern history. It is true that both films fill vast canvases with a wealth of miniaturist detail, but the correspondences end there. Hou's film brought a detached, elegiac eye to events that occurred before he was born, and used the experiences of a declining family in a provincial town as a microcosm of Taiwan in the late 40s. Yang, by contrast, is drawing on his own childhood memories (the murder at the end of the film is inspired by a real-life incident, as is the main gang fight) and his meticulous recreation of Taiwan's early 60s is correspondingly vivid and immediately felt. The effort here is not to recapture a vanished past but to articulate feelings that no one could have expressed adequately at the time. Yang's emotional engagement with his characters is crucial in this respect, and it gives the film a truthful and awesome universality.

Kitano Takeshi's *A Scene at the Sea* (Ano Natsu, Ichiban Shizukana Umi), which went unrecognised by a truly perverse jury, was the more interesting of the two Japanese films in competition. Kitano is an immensely popular actor-entertainer in Japan, whose two previous features as director (*The Violent Cop* and *Boiling Point*) were ultra-violent, offbeat thrillers. The new film could hardly be more different. A boy garbage collector finds a broken surfboard, repairs it and tries to teach himself to surf. His tirelessly supportive girlfriend watches from the beach. Both of them are deaf, and so there's virtually no dialogue. Kitano's central theme is the triumph through sheer persistence and courage of apparent losers, and he articulates it here through plotting, framing and pacing of exceptional purity. He doesn't know how to end the film (the last five minutes are a mistake), but he certainly does know how to grip an audience with modest and seemingly minimal material. Maybe popular cinema has found its Bresson at last?

cut sequences, two of which suggest that he is managing to go further down the avenues he opened in *Tetsuo*. Where the first film used organic metal as a metaphor for subconscious fears and libidinal urges, the new one shows men turning (or being turned) into weapons: the exact opposite of *Terminator 2*, which humanises and domesticates a killing machine.

Tsukamoto is impressed that I had read *Tetsuo* as an expression of the space between phallic aggression and the fear of sodomy; apparently no Japanese critic had seen it that way. *Tetsuo 2* looks to be probing deeper still into specifically masculine *gestalts*, and demolishing its share of macho stereotypes along the way. The last filmmaker to explore these areas was the young David Cronenberg (in the excellent and shamefully forgotten *Stereo and Crimes of the Future*) and Tsukamoto is clearly his equal as a poet, if not as a formalist. *Tetsuo 2* is the kind of movie that a major company would never back, and hence another vindication of Japan's endlessly surprising independent sector.

Back in the real world, the powers-that-be are anxiously debating whether or not Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* and Rivette's *La Belle noiseuse* can be screened at the Tokyo Film Festival (upcoming at the time of writing). Both films feature copious frontal nudity, which breaches the local censorship code. The solution that seems to be at hand is to allow *single screenings* of both films, thereby limiting them to small audiences and preventing them from exerting a pernicious influence on Japanese society at large. This is the same thinking that allows Tokyo's up-market bookstores to sell albums of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe and Bruce Weber: male genitals are OK for an elite, but taboo for the masses.

But the frontiers of Japan's censorship code are being challenged again, for the first time since Oshima went to court over *Ai no Corrida*. Asai Takashi, the Japanese co-producer and distributor of Jarman's *The Garden* and *Edward II*, is taking the customs authorities to court to fight for the right to import uncensored prints of both films. And the distinguished photographer Shinoyama Kishin is doing his bit for the struggle by publishing volumes of provocative photographs of Japanese celebrities. His latest offering is *White Room*, which contains some fifty pictures of the former teen-idol Motoki Masahiro, most of them nude and some with Motoki-san apparently masturbating.

It's too early to say if such initiatives will shake the Japanese establishment any more than the regular small earthquakes already do. But all the fuss in Japan's newspapers and magazines about this issue underlines the chasm that already separates independent film-makers of the younger generation from the mainstream of Japanese culture.

A film like *Skinless Night* necessarily reflects the hypocrisies of Japan's censorship code, but the censorship issue has been simply irrelevant to most independents, at least since Nagasaki Shunichi made his scabrous *Heart, Beating in the Dark* back in 1982. In this respect, too, a film like Tsukamoto's *Tetsuo* may well be signalling a way forward for Japanese culture.

Japanese names are given throughout in their Japanese form, with the surname first.

● Forget about the unfairness of it all. Stop feeling sorry for Thames Television, Phil Redmond or whoever else you thought drew the short straw in the Channel 3 franchise lottery. And stop dwelling on the thought that it was a pretty daft sort of auction that managed to award only five of the thirteen contested lots to the highest bidder.

The deed is done. Neither the courts, Neil Kinnock nor a supposedly chastened John Major is going to reverse it. But what will be the consequences?

In the not too long term, they could include television wars which make this year's contests look distinctly puny. We could see Central Television battling it out with the owners of Radio Luxembourg for control of the whole ITV network. And the programming changes which will happen as a result of the new licensees' takeover on 1 January 1993 could soon be overshadowed by ones far more profound. But let's start with the short-term consequences.

The initial impact of the Channel 3 auction will be less strong than many of the predictions of two or three years ago. Twelve out of sixteen ITV companies remain the same. Four out of five of the big regional companies who have traditionally produced most of network programming remain in place. And on the evidence of its conduct of the franchise race, the ITC that has replaced the IBA as regulator of British commercial television looks more like its predecessor than the 'lighter touch' regulator the government envisaged.

The Commission's detailed quality threshold requirements should ensure that to begin with at least there will be as much regional coverage, children's programming, current affairs, and so on as there currently is on ITV. It should also ensure that the bulk of ITV's broadcasting will continue to be made specifically for it rather than bought in from abroad. All the successful licence bidders have provided lengthy explanations as to how they will meet the quality threshold. Much has been made of the fact that these commitments will be embodied in their licences – although in how much detail we have yet to see. So in the short term, it looks as though there will be no major deterioration in 'quality'.

But that does not mean there will be no short-term quality deterioration whatsoever. In the very short term, the losers will cut back their regional production to the bone as they

wind down (Thames has already announced the axing of five regional programmes). This should, of course, be a temporary state of affairs, with regional production being more than topped up when the eager new licensees take over. The newcomers in turn will no doubt have teething problems, causing further blips on the qualimeter. But in eighteen months' time everything should have stabilised, with normal service fully resumed. This is the scenario painted by ITC chairman, George Russell.

There is an alternative – and far more likely – scenario: that these early quality lapses will set the precedent for later and bigger ones. Some of the ITV programming changes currently being talked about point in precisely that direction. One of the public service keystones of ITV has been peaktime investigative current affairs programmes, notably Thames' *This Week*. As Thames winds down, *This Week's* budget will be pared and it seems likely that it

will be moved to a later slot. "The amount and placing of current affairs shows in the peak-time schedule will be the main change post-1993", said John Fairley, programme controller at Yorkshire Television in a post-franchise-award round-up of programmers' predictions. "One half-hour show perhaps, but it won't be at 8.30 like *This Week* or *World in Action*".

Acquired features

In the same forum, Marcus Plantin, controller of programmes at LWT, declared: "ITV in the 90s will show more feature films and mini-series: more acquired programmes". This points to another part of the traditional public service make-up of ITV – the fact that the vast majority of its programmes have been made specifically for its audience rather than bought in from abroad. The ITC has recently changed its rules on acquired programming: the requirement now is that at least 65 per cent of programmes

New mergers – and less current affairs – are likely to follow the franchise auction, says Peter Goodwin

Apocalypse soon



BEAUMONT

should be commissioned specifically for Channel 3. In international terms this is a stiff remit, but it is rather less stiff than current ITV practice. The pressure is clearly on from the start to replace some commissioned programming by acquired material.

The precise forms these early changes will take depends on the make-up of the new central scheduling arrangements for ITV and the decisions of the yet-to-be-appointed central scheduler. The decisions to look out for, however, are how late in the schedule the current affairs programmes are shifted and how many remain; how much extra acquired material there is in peak time; and – another distinct early possibility – whether we get a five-day-a-week game show stripped into early evening.

Whether such early changes turn out to be the beginnings of far greater ones depends, of course, on the long-term working of the new system of licensees. Probably the least important factor here will be the particular characteristics of the four newcomers. Sunrise is in many ways a very similar company to TV-am and is likely to provide a very similar service – although even small differences in format could have a big effect on its comparative ratings with the BBC's breakfast service. The three regional newcomers are very different from their predecessors in that they are 'publishers' getting most of their programming from independent producers. The growth of the independent production sector is one of the most important developments in the British television industry in recent years. The 25 per cent independent quota has already taken it way beyond its roots in Channel 4. Carlton and Meridian will give it a new boost.

The central scheduler rules

Independent producers will sometimes claim that the sector is intrinsically more innovative. And the fact that British independent production arose to fill the needs of Channel 4, with its alternative remit, can give the illusion that this is so. But the independent suppliers of ITV network programmes will be a very different breed from the tiny, often nonconformist operations supplying one or two hours a year to Channel 4. They will be bigger, assertively commercial operations supplying what the customer – the ITV network – wants.

Carlton and Meridian outlined in their applications numerous specific new network

programming ideas that they would commission from independents. Most tried to look as much as possible like an idealised version of the current ITV. The name of the game was 'qualipop' – dream up your own variation on *Inspector Morse* or *Darling Buds of May*.

But even the named new network programmes proposed by the victorious challengers will in some cases not see the light of day. It is not the new licence holder who will determine what is on network, but the central scheduler. If the central scheduler decides, as very likely he or she will, to retain a significant amount of output from Thames – from 1993 easily Britain's biggest independent producer – then some of Carlton or Meridian's promised new projects are going to be squeezed out.

Far more important than the programming promises of the new licensees is the new financial regime of the whole system. George Russell is probably putting a particularly favourable gloss on things when he says that the new licensees will pay the Treasury only £40 million a year more than they would have done under the old system. But what is worse is that this extra financial squeeze is extremely unevenly distributed. On the one hand, major companies like Scottish and Central have made what are effectively zero bids. But others are tens of millions a year worse off. Heavy bids will for the moment clip the wings of big newcomers Carlton and Meridian, while some of the incumbents too find themselves heavily burdened. One analyst has estimated that if we apply the same model necessary to conclude that TVS should be ruled out for having overbid, then relative to their size, Yorkshire and HTV bid even more.

This enormous disparity in fortunes will have two effects. It will increase the pressure for mergers, as the low bidders take over the high bidders or high bidders are forced to join together to spread overheads. George Russell has already acknowledged that some of the smaller regions will soon be taken over by larger ones – at the moment the only form of cross-ownership of companies allowed.

The disparity in bids will also alter the pecking order of the big ITV companies. Rising to the top must be Central, the only one of the big five with an effectively zero bid. That raises some interesting possibilities. Central's managing director, Leslie Hill, has long been an advocate of an ITV system with only half a dozen

larger regional companies. Central already has a 20 per cent share in Meridian, but it is frustrated in significant further expansion by the current ITV ownership rules, of which Hill has been a vocal critic.

So we are likely to see the most powerful regional ITV company pushing to allow for more extensive mergers. And pressure in that direction will get a boost from another source. Most of the big European media conglomerates stood aside from the franchise auction. The Luxembourg-based CLT was the one important exception, but it was not successful. From the beginning of 1994, however, when hostile takeovers of ITV companies will be allowed, CLT and the other big Europeans will re-enter the fray, looking to pick off the overbidders.

European takeover

In the takeover stakes, the Europeans have the advantage of size – in their home territories they run national commercial networks. In contrast the ITV companies, unable by regulation to expand far out of their regional base, are much weaker. Faced with the prospect that the alternative is a European takeover, there is going to be a lot of pressure for the cross-ownership regulations to be loosened and a company like Central given its head to take over other big regions.

One further prospect is suggested by Central's rise. Hill believes that as satellite develops it will be necessary to level the field between ITV and satellite. In addition to loosening ownership regulations, that would also involve lessening public service requirements on Channel 3. Before the awards, Hill was a lone public advocate in ITV for such a case. Now he will find increasing support among his fellow licensees.

In an atmosphere of takeovers, mergers and overbidders in serious difficulty, the ITC is going to be less likely to uphold the fine print of licence commitments. If it has shown itself to behave very like the old IBA in the franchise auction, we can expect it to behave very much like the IBA in the event of a licensee in financial trouble not fulfilling its commitments. And the lesson from the IBA's behaviour over TV-am or BSB is that when it is a case of junk the commitments or go bust, the regulator pragmatically chooses the former. The ITC has been very successful in stopping the old ITV system going out with a bang. It could well allow it to go out with a whimper.

Cecil B. DeMille

Grand

illusions



Forget all the clichés about Cecil B. DeMille, demands Ian Christie. He is a director who is close to the Symbolists and obsessed with a mix of Orientalism and of modernising America

“Cece”, said the man at the next table, “that’s what we all called him”. I’d never thought of the colossus who parted the Red Sea and stage-managed the Resurrection, among sundry other miracles, as anything except the full-dress Cecil B. DeMille. Dress – ah! – who can forget those archetypal jodphurs and boots? They evoked the director as explorer, penetrating the dark continent of history on our behalf and, like a good missionary, bringing back trinkets to dazzle us. Or as archaeologist, bringing Ancient Egypt, Israel and Rome to life. Or perhaps as circus impresario, armed with whip and megaphone, putting countless men and animals through their paces – and all for us, spellbound in the darkness of the stalls.

The Ten Commandments (1923), *Cleopatra* (1934), *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952) – these are more than titles, they’re delusions of grandeur on a scale beyond mere authorship. And they’re part of our collective childhood memory. Admitting C.B. to the pantheon of filmmakers, *directors*, is like adding Barnum to the history of theatre, or the *National Geographic* to the history of art. It’s a solecism, a category mistake. Better instead to go on treating him as a legend, a phenomenon, an anachronism. He was a miracle worker in an age that viewed miracles sceptically yet credulously, but above all weekly, at the pictures.

“Cece” brought me back to the man behind the miracles and to the present. My neighbour at breakfast was Herbert Michelson, continuity artist on DeMille’s second *Ten Commandments* and one of the guests at this year’s Pordenone silent film festival. ‘Le Giornate del Cinema Muto’ was celebrating its tenth anniversary of triumphant resurrection of the silent era with ‘The DeMille Legacy’ – over forty films by Cecil and his older brother, William.

No one, I would guess, encounters DeMille without their own baggage of prejudices. He stands accused of vulgarity, egotism, sentimentality, hypocrisy, anti-communism – and all on an awe-inspiring scale. For myself, I only managed to shake off the Sunday school associations by rediscovering him through the wrong end of the telescope. When I became fascinated by the French ‘first wave’ of the 20s, it soon became clear that their fetish movie was *The Cheat*, a 1915 DeMille film that reached France late because of the war.

The film has lost little of its disturbing power today. Sessue Hayakawa’s revenge on the American woman who tries to cheat him of both the money and the sex she has promised is to brand her shoulder. As much as acting and story, it is the contrast between familiar American exteriors and the exotic Japanese interior of Hayakawa’s house, reinforced by stark lighting which makes good use of a paper screen, that creates an intense atmosphere of cool, perverse sensuality. Easy to understand how the generation of Apollinaire and Breton were stunned by such sophistication and how it inspired such future film-makers as L’Herbier, Delluc and Epstein to their own experiments in the saturated visual emotions of *photogenie*.

And what did it mean for DeMille? Over-



time, for a start, as we learn from Pordenone’s sumptuous catalogue (*L’Eredità DeMille*, to which this article is greatly indebted). According to his brother’s memoirs, Cecil had planned to direct personally just twelve films for the Lasky Feature Play Co. Inc in 1915, in addition to serving as director general of all West Coast operations. However, just as *The Cheat* was due to start filming, ‘director trouble’ struck on another film. “There was only one thing to be done, and C.B. with his usual audacity was determined to do it. In spite of the fact that *The Cheat* was one of the heaviest productions he had yet attempted, he decided to take over *The Golden Chance* company and direct both pictures at once, with two entirely separate production units. This he did by shooting *The Cheat* by day and *The Golden Chance* by night”. The result? “He finished both pictures on time and both were outstanding hits of that year”.

The Cheat was the eleventh film DeMille directed that year, and his twenty-eighth production since *The Squaw Man* appeared – against much greater odds – in February 1914. What remains astonishing is his ability from the start to find the dramatic fulcrum of each subject and the sheer pace at which he mastered the new medium. Research on the history of lighting by Kristin Thompson and more recently Lea Jacobs reveals that *The Cheat* contains a mass of innovations, ranging from the use of baby spots to pinpoint areas within the frame to changes of lighting set-up within a shot. Low-key lighting indeed creates the erotic climax of the film, as it would contribute to so many later films by C.B. with his regular collaborators, cameraman Alvin Wyckoff and art director Wilfred Buckland.

Cecil Blount (born 1881) and his brother William Churchill (born 1878) were sons of a North Carolina clergyman turned dramatist, who had married an Englishwoman and gone into partnership with David Belasco, the great reformer of New York theatre at the turn of the century. Belasco played a vital part in modernising traditional melodrama, making it ►

The Protestant spirit: Cecil B. DeMille, who directed two films at once, left; ‘The King of Kings’, with Christ transfigured in light, top right

◀ more sophisticated for the growing middle-class audience. After Henry DeMille died young, his sons followed him into the theatre, writing plays for Belasco and other producers and, in Cecil's case, acting and managing.

Neither had any contact with the motion picture business until Cecil's friend, variety impresario Jesse Lasky, who had recently lost money on a venture, was persuaded by his brother-in-law Sam Goldfish (later Goldwyn) to give it a try. According to the latest account of this fabled episode (to appear in what will sadly be John Kobal's posthumous book on DeMille), it was Cecil who persuaded the noted actor Dustin Farnum to accompany him on a journey into the unknown. There were five in the band who set off, armed with a camera bought on the streets of New York for \$350, on a train bound for Flagstaff, Arizona, to make a film of the stage play *The Squaw Man*.

Several weeks after leaving, Cecil sent a cable to his partners back East which is the stuff of legend: "Flagstaff no good for our purpose. Have proceeded to California. Want authority to rent barn in place called Hollywood for \$75 per month. Regards to Sam. Cecil". The barn that served as a studio for *The Squaw Man* still stands today, albeit on a different site. And the film that these unlucky novices laboured to make miraculously also survives, as does a fragment of Cecil's first remake of 1918.

Remakes are part of the DeMille myth, often cited as evidence of his hard-headed business approach. But comparing the still-primitive staging of 1914 with the final reel from 1918 shows a powerful cinematic intelligence at work. As the strands of this melodrama about an English aristocrat living in the Wild West come together, his Indian wife Nat-U-Rich realises that she stands in the way of her husband regaining his birthright. In the 1914 version, she shoots herself in a nearby field and is carried by her father, Tabywana, into the final reconciliation tableau.

By 1918, however, DeMille has devised a structure of 'objective correlatives' which has her fondle the toys belonging to her son before shooting herself beside a 'No Trespassers' sign as her husband's relatives approach to reclaim him. And it is he who finds the body and carries it round the corner of the house before laying it tenderly on a bale of hay. The melodramatic origins of the piece have been transcended by a mastery of visual pathos.

In the interval between these two films, DeMille had taken a bold step in the direction first indicated by his mentor, Belasco. He signed the Metropolitan Opera's leading star, Geraldine Farrar, for a series of films aimed squarely at the middle-class audience. *Carmen* (1915), *Joan the Woman* (1916) and *The Woman God Forgot* (1917) had all the dramatic and decorative appeal of opera. They took, or led, DeMille into terrain that would in future always be associated with him: they were period morality plays with fabulous production values and emotions on a scale to match. They were exotic, although comprehensible to the non-conformist sensibility

'Flagstaff no good for our purpose. Have proceeded to California. Want authority to rent barn in place called Hollywood. Regards to Sam'

ity that had formed both DeMille and much of his home audience.

The Woman God Forgot, in particular, set during the Spanish conquest of Mexico and chronicling the tragic fate of Montezuma's daughter and her love for a Spanish Conquistador, contains many features of the 'orientalism' that Edward Said has persuasively analysed as a tradition in Western art and ideology of the late colonial period. And it is perhaps in the imagined 'otherness' of this tradition that we find the key to DeMille's much-mocked sensuality and opulence. For in the films with historical 'interludes', as well as the full period pieces, there is surely that same ambivalence that Said detects in many Orientalists: visions of the past and of exotic 'primitive' cultures in the present are warnings as well as wish-fulfillments. It is what, for the most part, we have mastered. Said quotes Valéry, writing in 1925: "From the cultural point of view, I do not think we have much to fear now from the Oriental influence. It is not unknown to us. We owe to the Orient all the beginnings of our arts and of a great deal of our knowledge... Besides the real question in such matters is to digest... Our role is therefore to maintain this power of choice, of universal comprehension, of the transformation of everything into our own substance".

When DeMille begins to slip between past and present – starting with the comic period seduction capers of *Don't Change Your Husband* (1918), followed by the full-blown Babylonian fantasy of *Male and Female* (1919), leading to the farcical prehistoric parallelism of *Adam's Rib* (1922) and the Judeo-Christian tutelage of *The Ten Commandments* (1923) – he is showing what has been historically surpassed and morally repressed in reaching the pinnacle of American civilisation. Following the DeMille trajectory from modified melodrama in the mid-10s to the increasingly sophisticated comedies of manners of 1918-22 suggests a very definite



Born in the USA: C.B. and brother William, seated

project. Not necessarily a conscious project, but at least a coherent response to the challenges of the post-war world into which the US had emerged with new power and confidence.

What the 'divorce comedies' tackle is nothing less than finding a new moral code, without explicitly rejecting the Victorian values which still commanded at least lip service. How to cope with the rising rates of pre- and extra-marital sex and divorce which growing labour mobility and women's employment had brought? How to square the new middle-class lifestyle of conspicuous consumption and secular hedonism with what was supposed to have made America great? In *Old Wives for New* (1918), *Forbidden Fruit* (1920) and *The Affairs of Anatol* (1920), the basic premiss was a challenge to the Victorian ideal of the home and family. The husband and wife may both be tempted by dalliance – by something which has been lost (the romantic man) or something new (the flapper or 'jazz baby') – but both will discover the error of their ways and find solace in a modernised marriage of mutual seduction.

The model for this new partnership seems to be business. Marriage, we learn, demands investment by the partners, careful management, and often strategic compromise. If the husbands applied their business standards to the home, there would be less crisis. The elaborate titles which punctuate these films spell out the new contract, separately addressing male and female spectators. How important a part in framing the new morality was played by DeMille's regular scenarist from this point, Jeanie Macpherson, has not been determined, but should be a priority for future research.

The historical parallels introduced serve both as decoration and warning, as Larry May noted in his valuable social history, *Screening Out the Past*. "DeMille transferred his characters to ancient Italy, Israel, or the Renaissance. There the inability of the hero to control sexuality led to the loss of will and the fall of civilisation. The message was that modern progress could be disrupted by women's sexual freedom if it was not contained within the safe boundaries of the private, leisured home". The role of women – although it may now extend to an emancipated shop owner in *Old Wives for New* – is to combine modernity of outlook, dress and 'ideas' with the secrets of the harem. And indeed a popular strand of Said's Orientalism turns up surprisingly often in these films, ranging from smart gags – as when the prudish wife asks if her businessman husband wants her to dress 'like a Turk' in *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920) and their reconciliation is marked by her accepting the 'Hindustan' fox-trot – to the daring Technicolor prelude to *The King of Kings* (1927), which shows a Roman feast with Mary Magdalene as a courtesan languishing for her lover, Judas.

Allegations of hypocrisy and cynicism have been directed at DeMille so often for his religious films that it is important to remember that his first major venture in this area, *The Ten Commandments*, was actually suggested by popular response to a write-in newspaper com-



Sacred and profane: Gloria Swanson in 'divorce comedy', 'Why Change Your Wife?', above; the 1918 remake of 'The Squaw Man', top right; 'The King of Kings', right, one of DeMille's movies on the rise of Protestantism



petition. That film's conception (Macpherson again) is both novel and curiously old-fashioned. Novel, in that its second, modern part amounts to a graphic demonstration of the perils of disobeying Christian law, when a feckless architect's jerry-built cathedral collapses on his pious mother and he dies of what is clearly VD. And old-fashioned in the style of Lloyd Douglas' muscular Christianity. It may owe much, as Eric Rhode has suggested, to the hot-gospel style of contemporary West Coast evangelism typified by Aimee Semple MacPherson, whose flair for personal publicity and marketing rivalled DeMille's own.

If it was market research that brought DeMille to the super-orientalism of *The Ten Commandments*, it was a whole tradition of popular culture and high art that shaped *The King of Kings*. What is striking about this much-maligned work, when seen in Eastman House's superb part-colour print, is how freely Macpherson selects from the Gospels to create both dramatic narrative and awe-inspiring spectacle. Judas characterised as an upper-class firebrand and Mark introduced as a juvenile eyewitness serve to point up the presentation of a Christ who is never 'humanised', but achieves an almost supernatural presence through a range of lighting effects which mark the climax of DeMille's underestimated achievement in this field.

The DeMille legend all too easily encourages acceptance of the views of those who through the 40s and 50s regarded him as a self-parody, a titan of vulgarity. The *New Yorker* began its notice on *Samson and Delilah* (1949) with weary

condescension: "He has never taken a step backwards. He has never taken a step forwards either, but somehow he has managed to survive". Yet to look afresh at the silent period reveals on the contrary a dynamic director who rarely stopped looking forwards and backwards. Perhaps it is this ambivalence – reflecting in various degrees a Southern nonconformist heritage, the involvement in the transformation with Belasco of New York theatre, the pioneer experience of virtually creating Hollywood and, still insufficiently understood, the progressive influence of Macpherson – that makes him such a difficult artist to pigeonhole.

By focusing on this period, Pordenone has opened the way for new readings of the DeMille legacy. For it was in these films that he enjoyed remarkable (if hard-won) freedom and took real risks. His choices of material seem to have been motivated by a combination of social awareness, box office calculation and an idiosyncratic moral quest. At the start, this last is simply the melodramatic formula of pathos created by an innocent assuming the guilt and suffering of another – for example the exiled aristocrat of *The Squaw Man* covering for his scoundrel brother. Yet two years later in *The Heart of Nora Flynn* (1916), the first of his servant-master studies in transferred guilt, in which a blameless nursemaid takes the rap for her philandering mistress, the framework is clearly social and has become increasingly topical and challenging – a viewpoint which was to cause his partners endless anxiety.

The quest, if we think of it as such, assumes a more personal shape in the dark morality of

one of DeMille's personal favourites, *The Whispering Chorus* (1918), the commercial failure of which has sometimes been cited as his reason for abandoning 'art'. This dark precursor of both Expressionist and *noir* fatalism, in which an accountant's momentary moral lapse condemns him to a subhuman life of degradation culminating in execution in the electric chair, has a Dickensian epic moral structure and relish for the grotesque. And it didn't do all that badly at the box office, either. But exoticism, as we've seen, beckoned DeMille during the next four years towards something that seemed more 'modern'.

Although *The Ten Commandments* can be seen as a shrewd response to 'popular demand', we should be wary of taking it at face value. The fact that DeMille's own mother died soon before the film was conceived may have played a part in shaping the stark morality play that forms its second part – nothing less than a son's fantasy of killing his mother and ignoring his father's precepts. If such speculation seems doubtful, consider what DeMille chose to make when a dispute with his former partners forced him to go independent in 1925. *The Road to Yesterday*, based on a 1905 stage play by Beulah Marie Dix, takes us into territory which the Symbolists had charted twenty years earlier and which would again become popular in the 30s with a spate of time/space fantasies ranging from Auden and Isherwood to Priestley's time plays and Capra's popular moralities.

DeMille, however, is closer to Maeterlinck or even Poe. His newly-weds are lost souls, first seen against the primeval wilderness of the Grand Canyon, afflicted with a nameless dread and haunted by intimations of past violence. There is talk of reincarnation and self-conscious mockery of the spiritual by these 'moderns', until a terrifying train crash – one of the most disturbing *ruptures* of all DeMille's justly famous catastrophe images – sends them spinning back into Elizabethan England and the discovery of their linked destinies in a witch hunt. Here the montage device of radical flashback offers less an authorial comment than a mystical, cyclic view of history as 'eternal recurrence'. Like *The Whispering Chorus*, *The Road to Yesterday* signals a search for moral roots, the belief that audiences want – in the title of an earlier film – 'Something to Think About'.

In a sturdy defence of DeMille, Carlos Clarens has claimed that whatever their many virtues, "everything in his films is given to us on the surface; the metaphor, if any, is circular and does not refer the viewer to any secret; we are dealing with a signification without a signified". Clarens' instinct to avoid justifying DeMille in conventional auteurist terms is surely right. But his denial of meaning beyond 'what we see' sells C.B. short.

A more confident and ambitious criticism is needed for this epic figure that is not afraid to take him beyond even his own valuation, and that of his exasperated contemporaries. It is a criticism that would identify his role as the crucial bridge between Ancient and Modern – the prophet of modern cinema.

On the set of George Sluizer's 'Utz', Kevin Jackson reflects on filming Bruce Chatwin's apparently camera-proof novels – and on the translation of printed word into moving image



Licensed infidelities

● George Sluizer is having problems with his extras: coax, cajole or bully them as he may, they refuse to swim high enough in their tank. This is both galling and time-wasting, since the director had intended to begin this morning's location work on Bruce Chatwin's *Utz* with an atmospheric master shot of the 'Restaurant Pstruh' (in reality, the Hotel Europa on Wenceslas Square) filmed through its capacious aquarium. More than an hour has already been squandered on urging the recalcitrant fish to come up towards the surface, but they seem to dislike the warm currents produced by the overhead lights and are lurking stubbornly in the cooler water at the base.

Time travel

While the trout-coaxers go about their frustrating task, the production's three principal actors, seated at a central table, wait with stoicism for their first cues of the day. Armin Mueller-Stahl is playing the part of Chatwin's melancholic protagonist, Baron Kasper Joachim Utz, obsessive porcelain collector and passive rebel against Czechoslovakia's post-War

regime. Prague is familiar ground for Mueller-Stahl, since he has recently completed work here on Steven Soderbergh's *Kafka*.

To Mueller-Stahl's right is Paul Scofield, playing Utz' irascible friend Dr Václav Orlík, "pale-ontologue" and connoisseur of *Musca domestica*, the common house fly, within the Prague metropolitan area. On his other side is Peter Riegert – the young oil company man from *Local Hero* – who takes the role of an American art dealer, Marius Fischer, interested in Utz' invaluable collection of Meissen figures. An invention of Hugh Whitmore's screenplay, Fischer is compounded of two of the novel's characters: the vulgar and avaricious Dr Marius Frankfurter, who sells Utz a spaghetti-eating Pulcinella from the CapodiMonte factory in Naples, and the book's gentlemanly narrator. The 'I' of *Utz* has quite a bit in common with Chatwin himself: a background in the art world, the habit of extensive travel, and a polymath's taste for curious and forgotten lore.

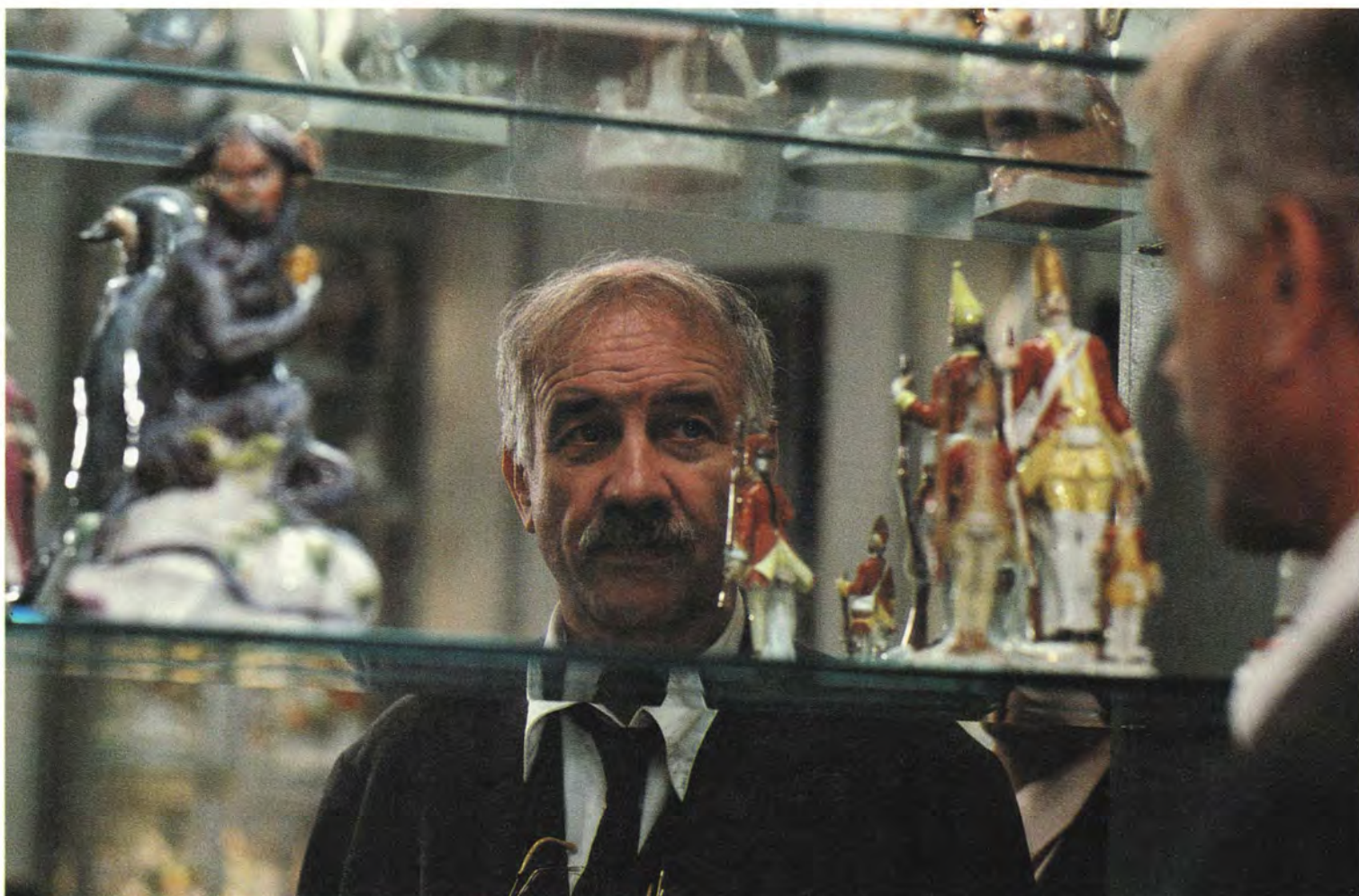
Whitmore's script has also taken some liberties with the time scheme. In this morning's scene, Utz and his companions discover that

despite its boastful name (*pstruh* is Czech for trout), the restaurant offers trout only to Party members. Chatwin sets his protagonists' brush with State favouritism in 1967, and *Utz*' death in 1974; Whitmore has updated the prickly lunch to 1985, and the filmic *Utz* lives on until 1989. This two-decade shuffle in time allows for contrasts between the Westernising Prague of the film's present tense and the harsher circumstances endured by the Baron earlier. In the restaurant scenes, the contrast is made with a dissolve, which begins on an innocuous wall painting of a woman in 1989 and then comes to focus on the same spot, occupied in 1985 by a poster of President Husak.

This is just one of the several temporal sleights-of-hand demanded by Whitmore's screenplay, which stays true to Chatwin's narrative method rather than following its movements point by point. Sluizer suspects that one of the reasons he was first approached to direct *Utz* was because of the precedent set by his best-known film, *The Vanishing* (1988), which brought an uncommonly intricate structure to bear on its story of an abducted woman, her grieving boyfriend and the sociopath who plays his horrific game with them both. "Usually films which try to deal with a lot of flashbacks, flash-forwards and different points of view tend to fail in the attempt, and *The Vanishing* was rather cleverly constructed and rather successful. I would say, though, that *Utz* has an even more complicated construction. Here the transitions are more hazardous – there's less logic to them and they are of more varied kinds: sometimes to do with an emotion, sometimes with a historical fact, sometimes with a classical flashback to twenty years ago and so on. We'll have to see how it works out practically when we've edited it".

But the elaborate process of assembling this tale is less immediately pressing for Sluizer than the humbler question of how to pull off the shots he had planned. Finally despairing of co-operation from the trout, he decides to film the main action first. Obese extras, playing the Party members, are put to miming acts of heroic gluttony while Sluizer sets up a tracking shot around the central table. Whitmore's dialogue here is largely identical to that of the novel, and retains the sourly humorous moment when the narrator notices a revealing error in translation: the only fare on offer to those outside the Party is carp, which the multilingual menu metathesises into 'crap'.

The trio of actors proves more obliging than the fish, and before long the day's shoot is beginning to run on some approximation of schedule. This whole production has been under pressure of time. Its relatively low budget (fruit of a co-production deal between John Goldschmidt's Viva Pictures and other backers, including the BBC) has allowed for no more than thirty-two days of filming, but Sluizer estimates that the translation problems caused by working with a mixed crew of monoglot Germans and Czechs have lost him a good 20 per cent of that figure. Multiply that loss by the factors that come of operating "in a country



Handle with care: author Bruce Chatwin, left, and Armin Mueller-Stahl, above, the melancholy collector of Sluizer's film of 'Utz', trying to survive in totalitarian post-war Czechoslovakia

where things move... a little slowly" and the true number of working days is, he thinks, something closer to twenty.

It is a punishing schedule, and may partly account for the intentness Sluizer is bringing to his task. A slight and rather academic-looking figure (like Mueller-Stahl's Utz, he is sporting two pairs of glasses, one set perched on his nose and the other slung loosely around his neck), Sluizer works steadily and unsmilingly. By his own, earlier admission he can be something of a tyrant on set when things are not going well: "You won't think I'm such a nice man when you see me working...". Today, though, he is an almost reticent presence, giving notes to his cast in a near-whisper and calling the end of each take with a murmured "Thankyou". Even so, the crew members evidence the kind of wariness which suggests that his voice has been considerably louder at times.

Not an airport best-seller

Sluizer's *Utz* will be the third film to be adapted from Bruce Chatwin's small but commanding body of work, following Andrew Grieve's *On the*

Black Hill (1987, from the novel of the same name) and Werner Herzog's *Cobra Verde* (1988, loosely based on *The Viceroy of Ouidah*). Brief acquaintance with Whitmore's screenplay and Sluizer's working methods suggests that in terms of plotting at least, *Utz* will steer a middle path between the wild licence of Herzog's film and the studious fidelity of Grieve's. Sluizer is certainly quick to insist that they have tried to follow the author as closely as possible: "Hugh has been very faithful to Chatwin, essentially because he liked the book and there was no sense in getting rid of the qualities that made it unique. And I have also tried to be faithful, though I sometimes felt the necessity to make changes because of, let's call it, the laws of film. But I have not felt the need to change it in the sense of, as you might say, 'Americanising' it - to get some action into it, to make it simpler, to forget the literary qualities because they are not playable, to forget the philosophy".

Sluizer's list of the particular infidelities he has shunned serves well as a reminder of how odd it is that producers and directors have been

drawn to Chatwin's work. In outline, to be sure, his novels might appear to offer endless opportunities for commercial treatment: far-flung locations, picturesque characters, humour, quests, violence and mysteries - all the familiar components of the airport best-seller. Even Sluizer admits that it was the "travel aspect" of Chatwin's work that briefly tempted him to make a film of *In Patagonia* a few years ago.

But though Chatwin's books are sometimes lined up with the James Clavells or James Micheners in the departure lounge bookstalls, their pleasures are very different. Instead of travelogue, Chatwin's six books offer unfazed scrutinies of remote places and outlandish ideas; they are neither intimidated by other cultures nor comfortably superior to them. The English-speaking cinema has long been drawing on better authors than Clavell or Michener to underwrite its trips aboard: Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene, even T. E. Lawrence. At their best, these films have been vigorous and expansive; in Greene's case, they have virtually made up a genre. One side of Chatwin's work can evidently be seen to ►

◀ take its place in this tradition (there are, as his essay on André Malraux hints, substantial affinities between Chatwin and Lawrence).

But other considerations set him as much apart from these writers as from the Clavells and Micheners. As the obituaries stressed, Chatwin was not only among the most intellectual of British novelists, but was a man who put his intellect to work on distinctly un-British concerns – the story goes that he lugged a volume of Heidegger around on his Australian travels. His life was an unabashed pursuit of the miraculous: which of his contemporaries would have had the nerve to write about stalking the Yeti, or meeting a practitioner of *fengshui*?

As in the case of other novelists of ideas, such preoccupations led him to pay less attention to the most readily translatable filmic elements of prose fiction – plot, character – and more to its discursive possibilities. The jury is still out on the question of whether *The Songlines* should be thought of as a novel at all, and it is certainly hard to see how the standard feature format could incorporate, say, the anthology of texts on nomadic migrations spliced into the book's later episodes, or its lengthy rumination on the genesis of human violence. In short, any but the most cursory reading of Chatwin's books might seem to suggest that they are designed to be virtually camera-proof. The limited evidence to date is not wholly conclusive as to whether Chatwin translated to the screen is Chatwin betrayed – though amused or disgusted viewers of Herzog's *Cobra Verde* could well be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

Good-looking movies

Chatwin's encounter with Werner Herzog generated a small gem: not *Cobra Verde*, but the memoir 'Werner Herzog in Ghana', a set report vivid and funny enough to daunt anyone making an essay in the same genre. Salman Rushdie's review of the collection in which it appears, *What Am I Doing Here* (1989), lets readers in on the fact that Chatwin had been charitably discreet about his "less than complimentary view of the finished film", though this would not have been hard to infer from the remark, earlier in the same volume, that "I felt the film was going to look spectacular but was not to do with my book. The star did not look like a Brazilian slave trader as much as a bad-tempered European woman".

A more heretical thought arises from the idea that Herzog saw in his veteran leading man, Klaus Kinski, certain aspects of Chatwin's own movie-star good looks. Chatwin's friend Colin Thubron once described him as having the piercing eyes and bulging cranium of the archetypal Nordic intellectual, and this, give or take a few growls and gesticulations, would also be a fair summary of Kinski's appearance in the film. Even if Kinski were not supposed to be a living parody of the author, though, it is hard not to see *Cobra Verde* as a determined caricature of *The Viceroy of Ouidah*.

It might well have been otherwise. As Chatwin's set report acknowledges, he and the German director were in many ways kindred

souls: both persuaded of the primitive virtues of walking, both fascinated by the outré, both robust travellers to the inhospitable reaches of the earth. Herzog came across one of Chatwin's books when shooting *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) in the Amazon, and, rightly guessing that Chatwin would bring a unique approach to the issue of Aboriginal land rights, approached him with the idea of writing the screenplay for *Where the Green Ants Dream* (1984). Declining – "He had his ideas, I had mine" – Chatwin gave him instead a copy of his novel about the Brazilian slave trader Francisco Manoel da Silva. This was not an altogether shrewd move.

By the time it reached the screen, *Cobra Verde* had jettisoned slightly more than half the book's hundred-odd pages, rearranged events and storylines from the filleted remains with a free hand, and transformed the elaborate chronological shuttlings into a more or less linear narrative.

What remains is intermittently absorbing. Kinski's part seems like a virtual reprise of his Conquistador general in *Aguirre, Wrath of God* (1972), and *Cobra Verde* sometimes manages to achieve a degree of the earlier film's seductive evocation of madness. Nor is there any shortage of those "spectacular" moments Chatwin glimpsed in the shooting: Kinski drilling his Amazonian warriors; the architecture of human skulls; a message relayed along a coastline by an endless file of white flags.

These images are powerful, but the power is like a bludgeon, sacrificing the sharper ironies of the original in favour of spectacle. Not even the most gifted director could render the nimble intelligence at work in phrases like "their hair was balkanised into zones" or "the slushed, suggestive consonants of Brazilian Portuguese" into shots. But there are endless ways in which film can answer verbal discriminations in its own language, and by and large Herzog turns his back on them.

Among the plot material thrown away is the book's present-day overture and conclusion, its accounts of da Silva's background in Brazil and the vicissitudes of the 'dynasty' he founds – exactly the material that might have cast the requisite ironies on the slaver's brutal career; whether rearranged into the form of a conventional history or (preferably) intercut. With one or two minor exceptions, Herzog gives no access to da Silva's inner life, and does not even include the incident which, on Chatwin's account, he liked best, when a young member of the da Silva clan watches a column of ants walking into the back of an unplugged fridge and says, "The refrigerator exists". *Cobra Verde* might as well have been taken from one of those airport blockbusters.

Andrew Grieve's *On the Black Hill* is at the far extreme from Herzog's film: though it makes certain economies, it strives by and large to be so faithful to Chatwin's plot that it includes incidents or people even when it has not time to bring out the significance they had in the original. This is a quibble, though, when set against Grieve's remarkable feat of intelligibly preserving most of the action from a novel of

more than twice the length of *The Viceroy of Ouidah* in a film of much the same running time as *Cobra Verde*.

On the Black Hill is the most traditional of Chatwin's novels both in content and technique; it owes rather more to Hardy than to Heidegger. Some of its concerns are grand – the horrors and delights of the twentieth century as they impinge on the tenants of a Welsh hill farm – but others are more modest. The novel follows the long and superficially uneventful lives of the Jones twins, Benjamin and Lewis, from their birth with the new century to their separation, eighty years on, by death. With material like this, a steadfast adherence to plot and character counts for more than it would with the other books.

Though like Herzog, Grieve has to lose almost every scruple of Chatwin's prose, his film offers us qualities the novel could not: the inescapable presence of flesh (or at any rate, prosthetics) as it wears and crumbles with each new sequence; the visual shock of seeing the twins' boyhood faces jump back into life in the features of their great-nephew. Above all, Grieve's film answers to the chronicle side of the book by providing sharp and unsentimental panoramas of a landscape which remains almost as exotic to the British cinema as Dahomey or the outback – an anti-pastoral terrain of snow and storms, slaughtered animals and unquenchable fires. While such landscapes are obviously there for the filming, so few directors have risen to the invitation that Grieve's foray has archival as well as intrinsic merit.

Yet precisely because *On the Black Hill* is the least typical of Chatwin's books – it is about settlers rather than nomads, its exoticism is paradoxically local, and it poses few structural or intellectual problems – Grieve's methods set only a limited precedent. *Utz* is not to be quite so readily managed.

Sluizer's alchemy

When George Sluizer states his apparently self-effacing intention to follow Chatwin's preoccupations as closely as possible, he is in part acknowledging that their interests are very closely allied – even more closely than was the case with Herzog. (There are odd currents of suggestion and influence here: it was when Sluizer was working as producer of Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* that he, too, first read Chatwin.) Sluizer has travelled almost as widely and restlessly as Chatwin did, directing many documentaries and several feature films on the way; he says that had he been born in an earlier century, he would probably have been "an adventurer, or one of those travellers discovering the North Pole or whatever".

There are, too, some pronounced affinities of creative technique. Chatwin produced his spare but eloquent prose with Flaubertian labour; Sluizer has shown a comparable scrupulousness in the construction of his images, loading even apparently utilitarian shots with strange hints and insinuations. Take, for example, the sequence from *The Vanishing* in which the villain, Raymond, tries to recruit his first



Word into image:
Marta, *Utz*' maid and
part of his collection,
above; Klaus Kinski
in Herzog's caricature,
'Cobra Verde', top
right; Grieve's
faithful rendering
of 'On the Black Hill',
bottom right

victim. "I got a fan letter from a man in New York who said, 'Oh, I loved that shot where the people were digging holes in the road in the distance behind the characters, it's a shot that anticipates the film's ending, isn't it?' Well, he's right, and even though I knew that very few people are going to pick that up, I went to a lot of trouble to do it. I had to talk to the authorities in Nîmes for three weeks to get those fucking holes in the ground, but I did it."

Such an interest in charging phrases or pictures with oblique meaning might be thought of as a form of hermeticism, and Sluizer joins Chatwin in taking unfashionable notice of occult traditions. *Utz* is replete with allusions to the Cabbala, to the Golem legends and above all to alchemy.

Pressures of time and money have kept Sluizer from following Chatwin very far down these tracks in his film of *Utz*, but he has wandered them in the past. *The Vanishing* makes some nods towards mysticism with its heroine's predictive dream, and there are other, less flagrant glimpses of the arcane world. "No one has to recognise this, but whenever the villain

is seen in his apartment, or where he can create an environment for himself, the colours are all taken from alchemy – greens and golds, or greens and yellows, the colours which belong to the people who tried to find the Philosopher's stone. I mean, this is a man who is trying to make people disappear, which is a little boy's dream. As a boy he probably tried to come up with a potion to make people disappear, and later, when he grows up, it is twisted into something else, the wish to kill. But basically, Raymond is an experimenter in alchemy."

Private worlds

Utz, among other things, is a fable about the corrupting aspects of the will to collect and the capacity of works of art to deaden the people who treasure them. But it is also a story about private worlds and the capacity to keep up a kind of integrity whether one is being brutally oppressed or seductively pampered. Early in its pages, a more stolidly anti-Communist character than the narrator praises *Utz* and his fellow inner emigrés by saying: "With their silence... they inflict a final insult on the State, by pre-

tending it does not exist". Collectors, 'paleontologues', philosophers and writers can manage to survive in quiet corners, just as the old supernatural traditions have lived on through successive regimes.

Sluizer says that the biggest challenge of making *Utz* lies not in its narrative intricacies but in the attempt "to make viewers take pleasure in simply looking at people and listening to them. I have a dream of trying to interest a reasonable number of people in something which is reasonably sophisticated and which has intelligence. That's something which is becoming very hard to do because films are becoming so simplistic, they're aimed at the under-sixteens. So, I'm really on the edge of saying, is cinema still valid, or should I be going off to work as a theatre director instead? I really have this fear that film today... has to be *idiotic*".

Sluizer's extreme pessimism is far from groundless, and it casts another light on his interest in filming *In Patagonia* and *Utz*. Chatwin's books are unashamedly intelligent; they brought back to English literature an intellectual range and dash more reminiscent of eighteenth-century philosophical fables than of those novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which have proved so attractive to film-makers. The recent British 'literary film' of the E. M. Forster school may have many solid virtues, but it is scarcely a vehicle for risky flights of speculation or the free play of extravagant concepts.

Chatwin's books are not so cosy. They chance eccentricity and wildness, and can infuriate or disconcert as frequently as they satisfy. They give weight to the reality of other cultures rather than using them as a picturesque backdrop for colonial heroes. And above all, they are dramas as much about abstruse ideas as about character. As Sluizer acknowledges, it is becoming harder than ever for the commercial cinema to accommodate ambition of this order; and yet the international success of *The Vanishing* has shown that it is still possible to make popular films whose thrills are as much cerebral as visceral. Sluizer uses an odd but telling phrase about his hopes for *The Vanishing*: he wanted to "titillate the intellect".

It seems likely that Sluizer's *Utz*, pressures of time and budget notwithstanding, will prove the most satisfactory Chatwin translation to date. If it also finds a decent audience, then even *The Songlines* – which, against the odds, was the book which finally brought Chatwin large royalties – could start to look appealing to producers. But even if *The Songlines* goes unfilmed and *In Patagonia* stays on the list of Sluizer's unrealised projects, Bruce Chatwin's books still offer their oblique examples for the cinema. Modest (or better than modest) best-sellers, they showed that adventure need not be adolescent, that an interest in non-Western cultures need not be subtly or overtly racist, and that intelligence need not be forbidding or dull. A hard act to follow, no doubt, but Sluizer at least appears undaunted; and as one of Chatwin's literary forebears remarked, it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive.

France is re-invading Indo-China – but this time with cameras. Three major feature films set in France's former *empire indochinois* are being released at the beginning of next year: Régis Wargnier's *Indochine*, a love story set in Saigon in the 30s; Jean-Jacques Annaud's *L'Amant*, an English-language version of Marguerite Duras' Prix Goncourt-winning novel; and perhaps most important of all, *Diên Biên Phủ* by 'veteran' Pierre Schoendoerffer. Last year's screening of Paul Capita's *Rendezvous des quais*, made in 1953 but not previously shown and presumed lost, which includes scenes of the unloading of dead soldiers at Marseilles, is further evidence that France is perhaps recovering from the amnesia that has afflicted it about a terrible episode in its imperial history.

Pierre Schoendoerffer, whose new film has a budget of \$25 million, one of the biggest in French cinema history, has not shared France's forgetfulness; Indo-China has been a recurrent theme in his work. His Oscar-winning documentary *La Section Anderson* (1967) follows a platoon of US soldiers through South Vietnam, while his *La 317e section* (1964), made in collaboration with producer Georges de Beauregard, godfather of France's Nouvelle Vague, was one of the major feature films on the subject.

Set in Laos and shot in Cambodia, *La 317e section* describes the fate of forty-five soldiers as they march through the jungle to take part in the battle of Diên Biên Phủ – the devastating defeat of 1954 that ended the nine-year long Franco-Indo-Chinese war and finally put paid to France's *empire indochinois*. Although the scale of the film – made on a budget of just \$66,000 – was very different to that of *Diên Biên Phủ*, Schoendoerffer sees the subject matter of

his earlier film as well as of his most recent one as the experience of the ordinary soldier: "the reality of blood and mud, but also the mirages within the heart of man".

The partnership on *Diên Biên Phủ* of producer Jacques Kirsner, a militant Trotskyite from '68, and Schoendoerffer, who has been described as a right-wing militarist with a "sentimental attachment to the image of a military and colonial France", is an unlikely one. Yet Kirsner has said that he believed Schoendoerffer to be "the only French director capable of realising the project I had envisaged". Kirsner, whose next, equally controversial project is a film about Marshall Petain, sees the battle of Diên Biên Phủ as "the turning point in contemporary French history" and the film as an important step for contemporary French cultural awareness. "I don't care if it makes people angry. And in any case, for the first time in my career I have produced something where the end result surpassed my dreams". His enthusiasm for Schoendoerffer's script and direction is echoed by Donald Pleasence, who plays a US journalist based in Hanoi: "It's the kind of script an actor comes across once every ten years".

Schoendoerffer had already wanted to make a film about the battle, despite his awareness that it was a subject fraught with taboos. Claude Bernard Aubert (*Patrouille de choc*, 1957) and Marcel Camus (*Mort en fraude*, 1957) had made minor feature films about the war in the 50s. And there were a handful of documentaries in the 60s, including *Hoa-Binh* by Schoendoerffer's cinematographer, Raoul Coutard, and *Loin du Viêt-Nam* (1967), an "assertion of solidarity with the people of Vietnam" made, among others, by Chris Marker, Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc

Godard, Claude Lelouch and Agnès Varda. Not surprisingly, Schoendoerffer was not invited to participate. "I had been a Vietnamese prisoner of war and was in no way a sympathiser. It was a left-wing project and I was obviously not a part of that group".

Schoendoerffer's experience of the war was a personal one. He was parachuted into Diên Biên Phủ, where the French colonial forces had made an air-to-ground base to block the Viet offensive, as an army cameraman, armed with a Bell Howell 35mm camera. The date of the Geneva Peace Conference, at which the 16th parallel was provisionally drawn and the independence of Laos and Cambodia recognised, was already set and the French expected to arrive at the negotiations as victors. At the end of the fifty-six-day long battle, the army of the Union Française had suffered a humiliating defeat and the loss of 3,000 men at the hands of General Giap's Vietminh. Schoendoerffer was one of the remaining 10,000 French troops marched to Vietnamese prison camps, of whom only 3,000 survived.

Schoendoerffer stresses, however, that his film is a fictional account. None of the famous participants in the battle is portrayed, and though colonels such as Bruno Gars Pierre are occasionally referred to in the dialogue, it is only by their first names. One of the few real-life characters in the film is Schoendoerffer himself, played by his son, Ludovic.

After his release from the prison camp, Schoendoerffer stayed on in South Vietnam as war correspondent for *Life* and *Paris Match*. "Indo-China was the country of my second birth", he says. "I became an adult there and have carried those experiences with me ever ►



Reincarnation: Pierre Schoendoerffer returns to the trenches for the reconstruction of the French defeat at Diên Biên Phủ, right; his son, Ludovic, plays his younger self, left

Return to Diên Biên Phủ

Pierre Schoendoerffer, director of the most important of a spate of new films on the French and their former Indo-China empire, talks to Sarah Ferguson



Filmography

Pierre Schoendoerffer

born 5 May 1928
Chamaillères, France

La Passe du diable
(1956)

Ramuntcho (1958)

Than le pêcheur
(1958)

Pêcheurs d'Islande
(1959)

La 317^e section
(1964)

**Objectif 500
millions** (1966)

La Section

Anderson (1967)

Le Crabe tambour
(1977)

**L'Honneur d'un
capitaine** (1982)

Diên Biên Phủ
(1991)

Weight of the past: the dead generations weigh upon the brains of the living – and are finally being confronted in France through films like 'Diên Biên Phủ', right



◀ since". He returned briefly to France in 1955 before going out to Morocco to cover the revolution for the French newsreel company, Actuelles Françaises. While there he met the writer Serge Groussard, a survivor of the German concentration camps of the Second World War. One night spent in the countryside near Casablanca, the two men discussed Schoendoerffer's ambition to become a director. "That night he persuaded me to give up just earning my living and to get on with my films. I took his advice". He returned to France and with producer Joseph Kessel made his first two feature-length films, *Ramuntcho* (1958) and *Pêcheurs d'Islande* (1959). Schoendoerffer subsequently returned sporadically to journalism, visiting Algeria as a television reporter in 1959 and for Paris Presse in 1962, arriving eight days before the declaration of independence.

Though his experiences in Indo-China have informed much of his work, Schoendoerffer had sworn never to return to Vietnam as long as it remained Communist. "There are things that happened during the war that I can never forgive and some people I didn't wish to see again", he explains. He agreed to make the film there only on condition that not a comma of the script be altered by the Vietnamese: "I needed proof that things had changed since my time in the camps... that the country was opening up again". Despite their puzzlement that the French should want to make a film about their own defeat, the Vietnamese authorities gave their consent. After consultations with General Giap himself, the project was assigned to Nguyen Thu, Directeur du cinéma vietnamien and MP for Hanoi.

Thu was also an army cameraman at Diên Biên Phủ, and it was he who found Schoendoerffer's camera after the battle. The two men met years later at the East-West Center in Hawaii. "It was a very emotional meeting, as you can imagine", Thu recalls. "But I am overjoyed now to be able to work on this film". Thu lost a leg by stepping on a landmine in the days after the battle, and the stories of his loss, and of his finding Schoendoerffer's camera, are both incorporated into the script.

A Franco-Vietnamese company, Seko Film, the first of its kind, was set up to produce the

film. Working on a scale almost unprecedented in the French film industry, Schoendoerffer signed a contract with the French army to supply uniforms and equipment, as well as a detachment of eighty-five soldiers from the parachute regiments that fought the original battle to teach the actors to parachute – all of whom ended up appearing in the film. Head of the detachment, Colonel Collin, who went on to act in Wargnier's *Indochine*, made contact with headquarters in Hanoi – the first direct communication between the two armies for thirty-seven years. Two ships were sent from Le Havre to Haiphong and three Dakotas from Oklahoma to Hanoi, the only condition being that they didn't fly over Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum.

Schoendoerffer confesses himself to have been overwhelmed by his return to Tonkin and by the level of co-operation with which he was met. In the course of the eight months he spent on location in Vietnam, he hired some 5,000 extras, "including half the staff of the French and Russian embassies in Hanoi", and was supplied with artillery, uniforms and soldiers by the Vietnamese army. "I was astonished throughout by the co-operation", he recalls. "We reconstructed old Hanoi, the Doumer Bridge, the Normandy Bar, and brought the entire city to a standstill for half a day". To film the events of the eve of battle – the 'last soirée of the empire', marked by a violin concert at Hanoi's Grand Theatre, modelled on Garnier's Paris Opera House and still standing as a reminder of the former French presence – Schoendoerffer asked permission to raise the French flag over Hanoi. The authorities agreed, but published announcements reassuring the inhabitants that the flag would be removed as soon as the shoot was over.

In 1954, Diên Biên Phủ was a small settlement of 8,000 people. Now a town of 100,000

Indo-China was the country of my second birth. I have carried those experiences with me ever since

inhabitants, it was too large and too far from Hanoi to serve as a location. Instead, the Diên Biên Phủ basin was recreated at Xuan Mai, some 50 kilometres from Hanoi, from the plans of Colonel Allaire, a veteran of the war and Schoendoerffer's military advisor on the film. All the battle scenes were filmed in natural light, the night scenes illuminated only by flares or dynamite explosions. The entire shoot used 3 tonnes of dynamite, one-third of it for a single shot.

Schoendoerffer wanted above all to convey the terrifying intensity of the battle, which ended in an eight-day siege of virtually hand-to-hand fighting. "Many of the soldiers' grandfathers would have fought at Verdun. The mud and the intensity must have been much the same". But the similarity doesn't end there. To those who fought in Indo-China, it appears that the government in Paris sacrificed the combatants, turning its back once it realised defeat was inevitable. By 1954, Vietnam had been declared independent anyway by Ho Chi Minh. For Schoendoerffer, the battle is a mystery: "Why did all those soldiers die for a country that was already independent?"

One of the factors that Schoendoerffer claims may have eased the French conscience is the fact that the war was fought by professionals: "The Americans sent 500,000 men to Vietnam; we sent only 60,000 and no conscripts – just full-time soldiers and volunteers like myself eager to escape the claustrophobia of post-war France". Yet the place of Indo-China in the French consciousness is far from resolved, and as Schoendoerffer points out, "I have asked myself why the French are prepared to spend \$25 million on a film of our most terrible defeat". The answer, he believes, lies in romanticism: "Indo-China was a long love story for France, beginning with the missionaries. *Diên Biên Phủ* is my adieu to that story".

An idea of the continuing complex response to the Indo-China war within France can be glimpsed from the recent 'scandal' of Georges Boudarel, now a professor of political science in Paris. Like many political idealists of the time, Boudarel 'joined the oppressed', becoming a *commissaire politique* responsible for 're-educating' French prisoners in the camps at Chiem Hoa. Earlier this year a group of war veterans agitated unsuccessfully to have Boudarel dismissed from his post and tried for crimes against humanity, including cruelty, brainwashing and diverting Red Cross supplies. For some, Boudarel is simply a scapegoat for the sins of the *empire indochinois*, much as ex-Milice chief Paul Touvier is for those of the collaboration. And as historian David Hemery points out, the current resurgence of right-wing nationalism in Europe makes it difficult for people to understand the political climate at the time of the Indo-China war.

Pierre Schoendoerffer expresses no doubts about his own viewpoint, describing the "white mandarins of Uncle Ho" as "criminals and cowards". He makes his position clear: "I don't want this man's skin. I just want him to know to what degree I think he's a bastard".



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A nitrate addict

An interview minus the questions... which allows me to ramble. The interview starts with a question about Curriculum Vitae XVII, one of a series of twenty.

Yes, well, I've been fascinated by frames within frames since the 60s. They crop up again and again in my paintings and books; and, of course, it's more or less a running device in *A TV Dante* to keep a visual dialogue going in this way. I used to put words around pictures but here the words are the picture and the pictorial matter a commentary. Derrida (*Ergon/Parergon*) goes on about this sort of thing in his opaque way. What a relief that structuralism has been rumbled! We can be ourselves again.

It had, of course, to be *Citizen Kane*. The whole series of paintings begins with the word 'Rosebud'. Here, the (literal) subtext says: "Play them again; the Stardust Memories of Madeleine Rosebud". Thus Proust's evocative cake joins Kane's sleigh to make the name of my Mnemosyne. The wise ancients know that Memory is the mother of the Muses.

It still hovers around the top of my list of Ten Best Films. Easy to forget how witty it is, or how moral.

No, my list is too predictable to quote. It's more or less the canonical consensus. Yet that's precisely the glory of the cinema. It doesn't just reflect our archetypes: it gives them their definitive and paradigmatic form. The clever architect (a woman, strangely enough for the time) who built the real St Simeon gave shape to one man's dream, but Welles' Xanadu is all our dream palaces, and, with rich irony, the mansion of our nightmares too.

Yes, there are a couple of very personal choices. *Death of a Cyclist*, for example. I think Bardon might be a Vermeer of the cinema, in the sense that Vermeer's work hung as a run-of-the-mill Dutch painter for over 200 years before Thoré-Bürger wrote the first article on him (after which Proust became his publicity agent).

Not recently. I don't go to the cinema so much these days. That refuge of middle years, the opera house, lures me more often. But of the films I've seen in the last couple of years I was particularly touched by *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives* and excited by *Blue Velvet*. Lynch's film even passed the Elephant & Castle test. I saw it on a screen which had FUCK YOU sprayed in huge letters all over the lower half. The management had tried to whiten out the scrawl but the whites didn't match and it was always visible in paler parts of the image.

I do see the odd routine product, but one can't be too careful. It's much more painful to see a bad film nowadays. In the 60s they were inoffensive, but what is bad in a film now is bad bigger and louder, and more luridly. It's agonising to be bullied by dullness, and, in terms of sound, I sometimes feel I've wandered into a special showing for the deaf.

Tom Phillips, painter and collaborator on 'A TV Dante', reflects in words and image, opposite, on films from 'Tarzan' and 'Citizen Kane' to 'Blue Velvet'



That's what I meant in CV XVII when I say, "I always knew the Dahlia was blue". I wasn't condemned to know the irrelevant colours of the sofa, her dress, and so on. Matisse said that anyone can put two colours down, but the third was difficult. There's yet to be a Veronese of the movies. The camera itself can't do what the eye does so easily, to select what colour it wants to attend to. A lot of the energy in an image can be wasted on futile colour. We became very expert in reading the colour in the black and white film. Now we have to sit there watching the colours stand up and murder each other.

No, I don't think it's anything to do with being life-like. Film is no more life-like than the print on the page of a novel. That naivety was summed up in the experiments with 3D. Film is life in translation: it may have its own self-contained reality, but it does not match the reality outside. One could never get away with that level of incoherence.

Why the opera? Same question, really. I just find it the art form most like life (but not life-like). It bodies forth the inner and the outer world of individuals, simultaneously. We talk, but our minds sing.

About those first films I say I saw: my conviction has been shaken by research. While Memory always tells the truth, one's recollection plays tricks. I may have conflated two visits to the Ammanford Workers Hall. *Tarzan and the Green Goddess* sounds like a New Age revisionist remake. What I probably saw was *Tarzan and the Leopard Woman*, but on a later occasion than *The Vampire Bat*. Anyway, after nearly fifty years I can still beat out the compelling drum rhythms of the Leopard Woman's massive male slaves (which begins to sound a bit modern, too). I'll trust Mnemosyne's cocktail of truth.

I was lucky. My father would, of course, never have heard the phrase *film noir*, but that was what he liked and what was on offer. As for film-as-art, I was fortunate that a school friend, Brian Baxter, had a precociously refined taste in cinema. Through him I got to know the classical

repertory and came to admire the work of Bresson. At Oxford, David Rudkin was a kindred spirit. He put me on to Dreyer and showed me that there was more in Hitchcock than even Hitchcock knew. He wrote and directed a film there called *Habeus Corpus*, in which I played the lead (as well as improvising the sound track with the aid of a stopwatch and a harpsichord). With great enthusiasm I started to make an animated film called (modestly) *The Creation*, but lost heart when three months' toil went by in eleven seconds.

Yes, *A TV Dante* was exhilarating to make, but it was only the start of an exploration into new kinds of visual syntax. Peter Greenaway has gone on to develop our researches to some extent in *Prospero's Books*, but there are many other avenues.

It stops now at Canto VIII (out of thirty-four). We were ready to go on when we reached that point, but the whole project fell into a confusion and a protracted desuetude. What seems to be emerging now as a plan to continue the production replaces an idea with a notion. Didn't Orson Welles say something about one ending up locked out of the studio with one's film being cut by the janitor?

The difference between an idea and a notion? It is an absolute imperative of the artistic life to learn to tell one from the other. As a rough guide, a notion is what last night's idea looks like in the morning. Notions are inert, undevelopable. Ideas put down roots, spread wings, expand into a moral discussion. Wittgenstein describes the artist's daunting dilemma when he points out that ethics and aesthetics are one and the same thing.

Yes, I'd love to be making a film.

If I were given *carte blanche*? I'd set about filming the *Ring of the Niebelung*. HDTV and film will soon collide and thus it could be made properly for both large and small screen. Wagner was disappointed at the end of the first cycle in the theatre he had built in Bayreuth. He said he had succeeded in making the orchestra disappear but did not know how to get rid of the stage. Now we can do just that.

CURRICULUM VITÆ XVII

ERAGON PARERAGON-IT'S THE SAME OLD GAME-THE PICTURES ARE THE ARTIST FRAME BY FRAME

A NITRATE ADDICT HOOKED ON CELLULOID
I LINED WITH FILM THE ADOLESCENT VOID
AND LEARNED WITH TRUANTS AT THE CINEMA
TO PEEL HER GRAPES AND WISH UPON A STAR

MY INFANT SCHOOL HAD SEVEN FILMS ENOUGH
TO MAKE A WARTIME CHRISTMAS TREAT:
A BATTERED COMIC SHORT AND FIVE CARTOONS
PLUS ONE LUGUBRIOUS DOCUMENTARY
WHICH SLOWLY TOLD HOW ENGLAND'S IRON ORE
BECAME GREAT SHIPS TO SMASH THE WILY HUN.
EXCITEDLY WE FILE TOWARDS THE HALL
WHERE MARSHALLED INTO ROWS WE SIT CROSS-LEGGED
AS GASLAMPS SPIT AND DIE FAR OVERHEAD
THE TALL PROJECTOR'S EERIE LIGHTS PICK OUT
OUR PAPER CHAIRS THAT BELLY FROM THE ROOF.
HUGE SHADOWED TEACHERS SERVING THE MACHINE
PERFORM THE RITUALS OF REEL AND SPOOL
UNTIL THE MOTOR WHIRRS-AT ONCE A FAN
OF SHINING AMBER MAKES THE CHALKDUST DANCE
AND HURLS THE JUMPING NUMBERS ON THE CLOTH-
UNSTEADILY A DARK CERTIFICATE
ANNOUNCES OUR FIRST FILM-MOUSE DUCK AND DOG
TO TINNY MUSIC. CAPER AND CAVORT
UPON OUR WRINKLED SCREEN-WE KNOW WHO WINS
THE ENTERTAINMENT ENDS-THE SHOW BEGINS
FOR THREEPENCE CIRCA NINETEEN FORTY THREE
AT AMMANFORD INSIDE THE WORKERS' HALL
WHEN TARZAN AND THE GREEN GODDESS WAS BILLED
AS SECOND FEATURE TO THE VAMPIRE BAT.
I SAW WITH OTHER KIDS SQUEEZED ON A BENCH
STRANGE NEW REALITIES DISGUISED AS DREAMS:
THE LOVELY LADY IN THE SPLENDID BED
IGNORED MY WARNING SHOUT-TOO LATE-I WATCHED
(A CHIP HALF-RAISED TOWARDS MY GAPING MOUTH)
THE FANGED BEAST CLAW THE GLASS AND SLITHER IN
AND EVEN NOW WHEN MOANING WINDS AT NIGHT
DRAG TWIGS ACROSS MY WINDOW THAT SAME FEAR
COMES BACK FROM FIFTY YEARS AGO-I LAUGH
YET SNEAK A SECRET GLANCE EXPECTING STILL
THE BEAT OF DUSKY WINGS ABOVE THE SILL.

MY FATHER LIKED TOUGH FILMS WHERE LITTLE GUYS
(FOR HE WAS SHORT HIMSELF) TOOK ON THE WORLD.
ON SATURDAYS HE STARTED TAKING ME
TO CLASSIC DOUBLE BILLS-THE WESTERN FIRST
WHERE LONESOME MEN KNEW WHAT MEN HAD TO DO
AND THEN THE GANGSTER-SCARFACE-AL CAPONE
AND LITTLE CAESAR-BOY! HE RUBBED THEM OUT
THOSE MUGS AND SUCKERS-TILL THE OTHER MOB
(HE NEVER SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED THAT DUMB BROAD)
CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AND PUMPED HIM FULL OF LEAD-
IN SOPPY BITS DAD LIGHTS HIS PIPE-I WATCH
THE GREY SMOKE RISE AND JOIN THE TRACERY
OF COILS THAT TWIST THROUGH STRIPES OF SHIFTING LIGHT.
THE KISSING STOPS-AGAIN THE BLACK SEDANS
THREE HODDS IN WIDE BRIMMED HATS-A DOOR INSIDE
A LETTERBOX CLOSE UP-THEN BURSTING THROUGH
A GUN'S DARK SHAFT EJECTING FIRE
BETWEEN THE FILMS SURREALISTICALLY
THE NEWSREEL MADE A COLLAGE OF EVENTS:
A CONCENTRATION CAMP-A SMILING GLIMPSE
OF ROYALTY-A SQUARE CUT FROM THE DON-
ONLY CONNECT (IT SAID) FOR SOMETHING LINKS
THIS MUSHROOM CLOUD WITH OPERA AND MINKS
AS IN SOME MEAD HALL TO A BARDIC HARP
HOMERICALLY IN BLACK AND WHITE MY MIND
WAS ETCHED WITH ALL LIFE'S BOLDEST ARCHETYPES
DOWN FROM THE FLAMES OF LUST TO GLACIAL HATE
TILL COLOUR CAME AND BLURRED THE SILHOUETTES
OF LOVE AND ENVY-WHY? I ALWAYS KNEW
HER LIPS WERE RED THE DAHLIA DARK BLUE
REX! ODEON! MAJESTIC! GAUMONT! RITZ!
MAGNIFICENT GRANADA! FROM THE BLITZ
UNTIL THE SIXTIES' GRAND ILLUSIONS BROUGHT
MORE POWERFUL NAIVETES-I WAS TAUGHT
IN YOUR PLUSH TEMPLES-AT YOUR SILVER SHRINE
MY LIFE WAS ALTERED-ALL FOR ONE & NINE

WE'LL GO NO MORE TO ELSTREE-PINEWOOD'S SHUT-
DEAD ARBOURS WITH THEIR HARDY LAURELS CUT:
LIME'S SACRED GROVE WHERE ONCE THE GOLDEN BOUGH
OF MYTH AND MAGIC GREW IS STUNTED NOW:
UNLESS YOU DREAM ME DREAMS OF HOLLYWOOD
HOW SHALL I KNOW THE BAD GUYS FROM THE GOOD?

Art of the book of the film

Simon Frith

Prospero's Books

Peter Greenaway, Chatto and Windus, £12.99, 168pp

Queer Edward II

Derek Jarman, BFI Publishing, £12.95, 176pp

Diary of a Young Soul Rebel

Isaac Julien and Colin MacCabe, BFI Publishing, £10.95, 218pp

Here are three pretty things. Three film books; three screenplays; three plush ways of paying homage to the auteur.

Greenaway's script is larded with location shots, inspirational art, sketches from his storyboards, and the Graphic Paintbox spreads for *Prospero's Books* (all, it seems, featuring bare breasts, colour-supplement-style). This is an Art Book.

Jarman's script is presented as a photograph album. On the right-hand page are portraits from the set and on the left the script sequence with a running commentary by Jarman himself, overlaid with slogans from the gay activist group OutRage. This is an Exhibition Catalogue.

At first glance, *Diary of a Young Soul Rebel* works differently. The book is lovingly illustrated with photographs taken on the set, while Julien's script works as a footnote to a more substantial commentary made up from his own (coy) shooting diary, producer Colin MacCabe's heavier-handed explanation of proceedings, and a respectful interview from the US cultural journal *Transition*. The book is presented less as a stylish artefact than as a media studies text, a guide to how a film is funded, how a shot is focused, how a vision is realised. But its effect is muddled by its packaging: its candid tone and photographs make this also an Inside Story. The book becomes a cross between an advanced introduction to film-making and a BFI gossip fest.

The 'book of the film' is a familiar enough marketing device, but the label has always been used to describe two different objects. On the one hand, it is a publishers' term for adaptations, whether the 'original' work, hastily repackaged with a film or TV still on the cover, or a derivative novelisation of the film or TV story, representing a profitable opportunity for sometimes surprisingly distinguished hacks (William Kotzwinkle's *ET*, for example, is rather good). On the other hand, the term describes a line of merchandise, a memento, like a concert or theatre programme, to mark the fact that you were there.

Such items obviously make good commercial sense – film and TV tie-ins can transform the sales of long-forgotten midlembrow pot-boilers, while merchandising

now often makes a significant contribution to a film's returns. And such books are useful for publicity, with the bookshop acting as a free advertising site.

It is less clear how, if at all, the book adds to the cinematic experience, or how the film affects the way people read the books. Certainly in the long history of film marketing, the script itself has never been an object of desire. Interest in screenplays has come traditionally only from an academic or practical interest in 'classic' film history and in 'classic' film technique.

Hence the peculiarity of this new ploy of selling art books of art films. To begin with, the sales strategy requires an emphasis on the creative genius of the filmmaker, even if, as with Jarman and Julien, the script is a collaborative effort. But, as though no one expects that anyone will want to read scripts (and I certainly don't), what matters more are the film-makers' own guides to their screenplays. Through their introductions, diaries and commentaries, these directors are justifying their work, telling us how to read what we see. The scripts are presented (as Greenaway makes clear) so that we can appreciate the complex, creative process of film-making. We, the readers, are being prepared for the film, rather than being reminded of it afterwards – though in their design, these books are also presented as souvenirs, as images for us to take home and pore over.

Rock writers have long known that the best-selling music books are star biographies and that sales depend on the status of the star rather than on the quality of the writing. But publishers have also realised that the best-selling bios are of stars whose fans are most likely to read books – a life of Jim Morrison, say, will outsell a life of U2. The trick is to bring the music-buying and book-buying publics into some form of alignment.

But it appears in the case of these new art-film books that the aim is less to



A plea to be taken seriously? 'Young Soul Rebels' director, Isaac Julien

The Artful Book: preparing the viewer for the complexities of Peter Greenaway's 'Prospero's Books'



exploit film fans than to persuade book readers to go to the cinema. For each of them works less as a celebration of cinematic sensibility than as a justification for cinema as a site of argument about the things that really matter – art and literature, sexuality, race and culture. Paradoxically, this need to prove cinema's essential seriousness of purpose is most in evidence in *Diary of a Young Soul Rebel*, the only one of the three books to focus as much on the practicalities of film and film-making as on aesthetic and sexual sensibilities.

Diary is aimed not at the film's supposed market, the soul boys, but at would-be film theorists; both Julien and MacCabe assume, for example, that their readers know something about "Screen theory" (and nothing about pop music). If the point of the film is to lay artistic claim to a popular genre, then the point of the book of the film seems to be to justify such populism by showing that despite appearances (or rather, sounds) the film is worthy of a 'considered reading' – in other words, that Julien is serious.

Whether this will work as a strategy for selling art cinema to the cultured classes is an open question, though both Greenaway and Jarman are now obviously established as acceptable creators, the 'difficulties' of their work easily handled in art critical terms. By contrast, the reasons why, to my mind, *Young Soul Rebels* is a failure as a film – too much theoretical weight piled on too flimsy a story – come through clearly in its book.

What all three books suggest is that for British film-makers to reach the same respectful audiences as British poets, painters or literary academics, they have to pretend they're not film-makers at all. But why they should want to reach such audiences is another question.

A funny life

Geoff Brown

Preston Sturges on Preston Sturges

Preston Sturges, adapted and edited by Sandy Sturges, Faber and Faber, £14.99, 352pp

When Robert Lescher of Henry Holt Publishers received the opening chapters of Preston Sturges' autobiography in 1959, hopes for a glittering good read were soon dashed. "The pages were prolix, repetitive, often distasteful – really just terrible", Lescher told Donald Spoto, Sturges' most recent biographer. Gradually, as he raked over his past and dictated to a secretary during the night hours at New York's Algonquin Hotel, Sturges seems to have gained confidence. But after he died that August, burned-out at sixty-one, no one rushed to bring the 400 pages of *The Events Leading Up to My Death* – Sturges' intended title – before the public.

Yet for anyone who reveres *The Palm Beach Story*, *Sullivan's Travels* and their Paramount companions, any new Sturgesiana is welcome. And by ruthlessly applying scissors and blue pencil, and supplementing the pages with extracts from Sturges'



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own diaries and correspondence, Sandy Sturges, the director's widow, has finally leashed the monster. The result may not be the cornucopia of information and jaunty japes we might have wished, but it is a perfectly respectable and readable narrative nonetheless.

As autobiography, the book proves lopsided. The films that earned Sturges his dazzling reputation in the 40s are annoy-

ingly rushed through, while his earlier experiences traipsing round Europe with his bohemian mother, Mary Desti, and her assorted husbands, having affairs, serving in the Royal Flying Corps and attending to the family cosmetics business take up too many chapters by far.

By the time he settled down seriously to his memoirs in 1959 (some previous drafts date from the 40s), Sturges apparently found it hard to recall his early years in precise detail. Pages are flecked with "I don't remember" or "according to mother" (a dangerous attribution, as Mary Desti, born Mary Dempsey, embroidered the truth as much as her name). The stories Sturges spins are generally entertaining, though it is a good job the author is not on the witness stand. "After lunch we walked over to the theatre", he writes at one point. "I think it was the Biltmore, but it probably wasn't".

Despite the ditherings and ramblings, we can still detect in these wry, mellow musings the Hollywood maverick who wrote his scripts with a razor's edge and ransacked the extremities of the language. "Contumely", "happenstance" and "caravansary" rub sentences with "old poops", "swandangled" and "a real lulu". Sturges the autobiographer also retains his gift for whipping up a conversational whirlwind. Writing about how his mother wheedled non-existent money from the vice president of a Paris bank, he

Revelling in the whirlwind: Preston Sturges, bottom, and 'The Palm Beach story', above, one of his tender and farcical comedies

blocks out the action and dialogue with the gusto - if never the coruscating wit - characteristic of his best films.

With all the book's flaws, Sturges still paints a valuable self-portrait, warts, contradictions and all. A concerned husband once he meets and marries the young Sandy, he is also an incorrigible male chauvinist. At the time of writing, he seems marooned ("Most of the glamour seems to have gone out of the whole damn world"), wearied by too many failures and lost fortunes ("I faced a black Christmas, without money, without hope").

Yet the abiding impression is of a man revelling in the tumult and craziness of life. Anyone else would have undergone the Royal Flying Corps training in a yawning, featureless desert. Not so Preston Sturges: he goes to Camp Dick, Dallas, Texas - a fairground site with buildings shaped like mustard pots, chilli bowls, and a giant bottle of Log Cabin Syrup.

British made

John Ellis

Creativity and Constraint in the British Film Industry

Duncan J. Petrie, Macmillan, £45, 249pp

Why try to make films in Britain? I turned to this book for insight into the folly that drives producers and directors to do so and for illumination of the pitfalls that so often prevent them from satisfying their desires.

I found a brisk summary of theories of creativity, centred on a contrast between Raymond Williams and Theodor Adorno, and a series of chapters on different aspects of the British feature film industry. But the chapter on marketing is the only one that holds any surprises and that manages to articulate fully the relationship between the various constraints within an overall theory of creativity. The rest is more a history of British cinema in the 80s - probably the best history that this dismal decade will get, but not the book promised by the title.

The reason is simple. Petrie takes as his subject 'British cinema' at a point when the term 'national' and the area 'cinema' no longer fit together. His account neglects major television work, admittedly a fault shared by many others. However, his failure to scrutinise all UK feature film production is more serious. An unexamined notion of 'Englishness' creeps in by the back door, ruling out anything considered to be 'international'. Hence Jeremy Thomas gets short shrift compared to David Puttnam, and Mark Forster does not even rate a mention.

Rather than a celebration of Bertolucci or Connie Templeman, there are ritual regrets about the emigré generation of Scott/Parker/Lyne. The significance of the impact of *Batman* and *Indiana Jones* on the minds of British-based technicians is passed over: the author's desire for a British cinema prevents such lines of enquiry. This is no idle complaint. The demand from critics that film-makers should



◀ create something called 'British cinema' is one of the greatest psychic constraints on film-making in this country.

Most of the interesting work with cinematic genres in Britain has come out of television – for example, BBC producer Michael Wearing's thrillers, from *Rainy Day Women* onwards, or series like *South of the Border* and *Kinsey*. If you are searching for glimmers of a routine yet thriving cinematic imagination, then this is the place to look for it.

In the end, the constraints governing British film-making are more complex than Petrie will allow. The relationship between television and cinema is becoming more fluid. There are a number of successful and high-profile producer strategies. The industry is particularly insular in its technological thrall to US practices. Opportunities for aesthetic experiments are severely limited when commercial survival is the priority.

Those, like Peter Greenaway, who have struck out on their own continue through defiant individualism rather than from any wider support. Film-making in Britain is fatally flawed by the legacy of the predominant notion of British cinema, which, despite all the critical re-evaluations, still haunts the minds of today's film-makers.

Author, author

Christopher Bray

International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers 2: Directors

Nicholas Thomas (ed), St James Press, £75, 958pp

With a still from *The Draughtsman's Contract* on the cover of Volume 1, and a picture of a young Michael Powell on the front of Volume 2, the second edition of the *International Dictionary of Film and Filmmakers* looks like a very British coup. Fortunately, though the coverage of British films has increased, it has not done so at the expense of anything else.

Which is not to say that the dictionary is exhaustive. Many of those Andrew Sarris once called "subjects for further research" have here been subjected to further research, but there are still omissions. Presumably the actor/directors – Marlon Brando, Ida Lupino, Charles Laughton, John Wayne – will turn up in the volume on stars, and Garson Kanin in Volume 4 on screenwriters. But where are Clive Donner, Byron Haskin, Bryan Forbes, Terence Young, Bo Widerberg? Minor figures, admittedly, but not without influence. Philip Kemp contributes on Robert Hamer, Charles Crichton and Alexander Mackendrick, but surely space could have been found for Henry Cornelius (*Passport to Pimlico*, *Genevieve*). I even thought Stanley Kramer had been left out. In fact he has his rightful place; it's just that the contents page lists him as Robert Kramer.

Horror is reasonably well represented (although there is no mention of Seth Holt), yet for all the critical attention it has recently received, the musical is skipped

over. Busby Berkeley gets in, but there is no Gene Kelly (who, whether you like the way he did it or not, virtually reinvented the form), no Mark Sandrich, and no George Sidney.

The book offers a mixed bag of some 150 contributors. David Bordwell condenses his fine book on Ozu. Robin Wood's piece on Hitchcock (a précis of a chapter in the newest edition of his *Hitchcock's Films*) is one of his best. Elsewhere, we are on shakier ground. Richard Lippe's 1,000 words on Joan Micklin Silver clumsily argue that she is a feminist without knowing it. Maybe so, but some of this space might more profitably be used for a discussion of, say, the work of Marleen Gorris.

Dr Johnson said that a dictionary is like a watch: while the worst is better than none, even the best can't be expected always to be true. In general, the quality of the criticism here is not as good as that in the late Richard Roud's *Cinema: a Critical Dictionary*. But the volume is full of valuable facts: there is a filmography (useful) and a bibliography (very useful) for every director. Both are more expensively set out than before, with each entry on a separate line. It makes for easier reading, and the resulting white space can be used for the writing of notes.

That is if you can afford your own copy. When you consider the price, the *International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers* is more a library book than a comrade for Halliwell and Katz. A pity, since this is a most valuable series.

Before the revolution

Tony Rayns

Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema

Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (eds), Routledge, £35, 256pp

The previous volume edited by Taylor and Christie, *The Film Factory*, was an anthology of hitherto untranslated documents relating to the early decades of Soviet cinema and its Russian antecedents. This is the logical follow-up: a collection of historical and critical essays designed to hasten the demolition of the canonic orthodoxies



Dictionary features: Charles Crichton, above, is recognised; Bryan Forbes, below, is not



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that have determined our view of pre-war Soviet cinema. The aim is to cut through the mystique that still surrounds Soviet revolutionary cinema by clarifying the topography of Russian/Soviet cinema as a whole, from its initial links with theatre to its struggles with sound and Stalinism.

It is a valiant and long-overdue project, and the scale of the work that needs to be done can be measured by the disjunctions between essays. Ian Christie and Denise J. Youngblood, for example, set out to reclaim Yakov Protazanov (director of *Aelita*, which remains little seen and usually misrepresented) as a key figure in the transition from Russian to Soviet cinema. They argue that his films are truer barometers of popular tastes and attitudes than those of his avant-garde contemporaries. They make a strong case, but the Protazanov they describe seems to have almost nothing in common with the static, logocentric cinema that Yuri Tsivian's essay on early Russian films identifies as culturally specific to Russia.

The book's range is wide. Vance Kopley Jr offers a pioneering sketch of the Soviet cinema's industrial development, paying particular attention to the capital gains and ideological losses of the pragmatic New Economic Policy period of 1921-29. Richard Taylor reassesses the widely reviled Boris Shumyatsky, chairman of Soyuzkino from 1930 to 1937, arguing that he was not merely the apparatchik who shot down Eisenstein's *Bezhin Meadow* (*Bezhin Lug*), but a man at least as well equipped to straddle the gaps between film-makers and audiences as, say, Louis B. Mayer or Irving Thalberg.

Bernard Eisenschitz contributes a warm and revealing account of the career of Boris Barnet, a major talent who escaped canonisation. Two interviews with the late Aleksandr Medvedkin are edited together to produce a vivid (and hopelessly self-important) statement of the path that led him to *Happiness* (*Schaste*, 1934). And J. Hoberman's essay on the virtually unknown Soviet Yiddish cinema of the 20s and 30s (presumably a foretaste of his imminent book on the several 'lost' Yiddish film industries) fills yet another significant gap.

Inevitably, though, a book like this reads like a series of appendices to a his-

Eisenstein's 'Bezhin Meadow': shot down by the apparatchik Boris Shumyatsky?



RETNA

tory that remains to be written. Most writers here pay respect to Jay Leyda and other pioneers who tried to map out the terrain under the constraints of the past. But they also call for a new and vastly more comprehensive foundation for this work: a history without ideological blinkers that would start from pre-Soviet cinema and include not only textual analyses of films (and that means *all* films), but also an examination of economic and technological factors, the roles of film theorists, cultural commissars, distribution networks, audiences and so on.

The utopian wish for a history with all the answers is understandable, but it seems excessive to demand that a comprehensive account of Russian and Soviet cinema be a top priority for film studies. Soviet cinema is hardly underrepresented in international thinking about film: a vast literature (however partial) already exists on the subject; many films are in international distribution and countless others (now including pre-Soviet titles) are screened in retrospectives. By comparison, Chinese cinema (which has a history nearly as long and complex) remains uncharted territory: to date there is no reliable general history in any language, including Chinese. Special pleading apart, though, this book is an admirable step in the right direction. It is also mercifully free of theoretical jargon.

Schlock horror

Stan Nicholls

Shock Xpress: The Essential Guide to Exploitation Cinema

Stefan Jaworzyn (ed), Titan Books, £12.50, 192pp

One definition of the word 'exploit' is: "A notable feat or deed, usually heroic". And certainly many exploitation film-makers struggle heroically to survive on the underside of the industry. Working with minuscule budgets, vilified or ignored by critics, they keep going on dedication and hopes of a break into the mainstream. Some make it; others inhabit a mid-way twilight zone; many remain in Z-movie territory. *Shock Xpress*, a compilation of reprints from a UK magazine that folded in 1989, features all three categories.

Mike Wathen tells how Roger Corman, everyone's favourite shoestring entrepreneur, ran his own production outfit, The Filmgroup, between 1959 and 1964. Never spending more than \$50,000 on a movie, and concentrating on juvenile delinquency (*Date Bait*, *High School Caesar*) and schlock horror (*The Wasp Woman*, *Dementia 13*), the company eventually folded. Yet during this period Corman made one of his best films, *The Intruder*, which bombed, and his most famous, *The Little Shop of Horrors*. The totality of Corman's output may be greater than its individual parts, but who could fail to warm to someone who once undertook to shoot a picture in three days "as a dare"?

Corman's greatest contribution may be to have given chances to a host of talented

people. One of them, Joe Dante, who started in the trailers department of Corman's New World, is interviewed by Kim Newman. Dante reveals that *Hellzapoppin'* influenced *Gremlins 2* and that he turned down *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* because he found the rabbit "a jerk". "I'm interested in real people", he claims, "but nobody ever believes that".

Harry Alan Towers probably qualifies as Britain's nearest equivalent to Corman. He lost count long ago of the films he's produced, and once boasted that he could step off a plane anywhere in the world and have a movie in production twenty-four hours later. "He neglected to mention how quickly he would be compelled to take the return flight", interviewer Allan Bryce wryly observes. With titles like *Psycho Circus*, *House of 1000 Dolls* and *The Million Eyes of Su-Muru* to his credit, Towers may well be responsible for more stinkers than any other UK independent.

Corman, Dante, Towers and their ilk represent the acceptable face of exploitation. But many of those featured bring to mind the second definition of 'exploit': "To take advantage of a person or situation for one's own ends". It is in this aspect that *Shock Xpress* seems most interested.

Colin Davis' 'Freaks in the Cinema' proves less offensive than the accompanying illustrations might suggest, but left me uneasy nonetheless. The photographs illustrating Jack Stevenson's piece on censorship in Germany, five of them close-ups of open wounds from *Army Medicine in Vietnam*, also seem hard to justify.

But the epitome of exploitation sleaze is represented by Italian director Michele Soavi. His film *The Sect*, as Alan Jones recounts, includes scenes of a woman being rivet-gunned to the floor before having her face ripped off, while another is suffocated with a sweat-soaked cloth.

This unquestioning acceptance of women as victims and the apparent gloating over the stalk 'n' slash sub-genre is distasteful to say the least. Many exploitation movies use science fiction and horror conventions imaginatively and intelligently; several women directors (Stephanie Rothman, Penelope Spheeris, Amy Jones) have done interesting work in exploitation genres. *Shock Xpress* fails to register this fact, preferring to feature the titillation and gratuitous bloodletting for which exploitation cinema is all too often an excuse.

Heroic exploit: 'The Intruder', made by Roger Corman's own shoestring production company



Shorts

Costume Design in the Movies: An Illustrated Guide to the Work of 157 Great Designers

Elizabeth Leese, Dover Publications, £12.55, 171pp

● A revised edition which includes additional film credits and new photographs. Leese's introduction traces the history of couture on the screen from silent serial stars like Pearl White and Eleanor Woodruff to the present-day fashion for nostalgic period films.

Images of Australia: 100 Films of the New Australian Cinema

Neil Rattigan, Southern Methodist University Press, \$12.95, 338pp

● A history of Australian cinema from the birth of the 'new wave' in the 70s to its transformation in the 90s. The introduction discusses the cultural context, national identity, the myth of the bush, the legend of the pioneer and the image of the ocker – a species of rogue Australian male. There are brief credits, synopsis and commentary for each of the films.

The Illusion of Life: Essays on Animation

Alan Cholodenko, Power Publications in association with the Australian Film Commission, A\$19.95, 312pp

● A collection of scholarly essays based on work emerging from the world's first international conference on animation. The essays are mostly informed by post-structuralist theory from Derrida to Baudrillard, but Chuck Jones' talk 'What's Up Down Under' adds a lighter tone.

Scenes Unseen: Unreleased and Uncompleted Films from the World's Master Filmmakers 1912-1990

Harry Waldman, McFarland & Company, £26.25, 276pp

● The stories behind all those unfinished and lost potential masterpieces. Orson Welles' 1956 documentary *Gina Lollobrigida* turns up in the 'Their Own Worst Enemies' category, while Maya Deren's *The Witch's Cradle* and Germaine Dulac's *Werther* appear in 'Abrupt Halts'. Thorold Dickinson's film about Machiavelli, *Then and Now*, and Hiroshi Teshigahara's *Ako*, a thirty-minute episode for a compilation about adolescent sexuality, were definitely 'Too Hot to Handle'.

Hoffman's Guide to SF, Horror and Fantasy Movies 1991-92

Corgi, £12.99, 432pp

● This book claims to be "probably the most comprehensive collection of fantasy films that has been brought together in one publication". Buffs should beware: the original *Terminator* is not the only movie deemed unworthy of inclusion...

Hollywood Shot By Shot: Alcoholism in American Cinema

Norman K. Denzin, Aldine De Gruyter, \$22.95, 292pp

● Sociologist Denzin attempts to define the 'alcoholism film' as a sub-category of the social problem genre. The book devotes considerable space to discussion of the role of the male alcoholic's long-suffering wife or girlfriend in the narratives, arguing that the films' Oedipal themes often reproduce patriarchal images of these women, and of the female alcoholic.

Reviews

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films and new British TV films

Ama

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
Artificial Eye
Production Company
Efiri Tete Films
For Channel 4
Producers
Kwesi Owusu
Kwate Nee-Owoo
Production Managers
Antonella Ibba
Ghana:
Nii Laryea Horley
Albert Bediako
Assistant Director
Ingrid Lewis
Screenplay
Kwesi Owusu
Directors of Photography
Jonathan Collinson
Roy Cornwall
In colour
Computer Animators
Chris Prior
Jeanne Verdoux
Editor
Justin Hrish
Art Directors
Ruhi Chaudry
Nigel Ashby
Keith Khan
Music
Kwesi Owusu
Vico Mensah
Additional:
Nana Danso Abiam
Music Performed by
Ray Allen
Pauline Oduru
Billie Richardson
Lucky Mpawenda
Simi Zeko
Lindell Lewis
Additional:
The Pan African Orchestra, Ghana
Songs
"Brave It", "Steppin' Out" by Hiddus 1;
"Inside the Night" by Ken Boothe; "High Wire" by Deborah Sharpe; "Jazz Swing" by Ray Allen
Costume Design
Farouk Abdullah

Wardrobe Supervisor
Leslie Gilda
Make-up
Anna Copley
Tammy Harewood
Ruth Khan
Sound Editor
Jacky Garstin
Sound Recordists
John Anderton
Jason Russell
Ghana:
Samuel Quainoo
Sound Re-recorder
Peter Smith
Production Assistant
Rebecca Loak

Cast
Thomas Baptiste
Babs
Anima Misa
Corri
Roger Griffiths
Joe
Nii Oma Hunter
UK
Joy Elias-Rilwan
Araba
Georgina Ackerman
Ama
Gary Marius
Paul
Verona Marshall
Joyce
Eddie Tagoe
Brother Josh
Alexandra Duah
Sister Mabel
Malcolm Fredericks
George
Okon Jones
Boss
Pauline Bailey
Arlene

Pitika Ntuli
Zuluman
John Deery
Dave
Adzido Pan African Dance Company
Ellen Miller
Winston Grant
Brother Niyi
Pan African Orchestra, Ghana
Performers
Alistair McGowan
Voice-over

9,600 feet
100 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Directors: Kwesi Owusu, Kwate Nee-Owoo

While out in the English countryside with her family, twelve-year-old Ama plays hide-and-seek with her friends and finds a computer disc in a deserted African encampment. Her brother Joe, an aspiring young boxer, picks up their uncle, UK, an environmental scientist, who is in London from Ghana to attend a conference. UK wants his brother, Babs, the youngsters' father, to return to Ghana. Ama and her mother clean offices in the city unbeknownst to Babs.

Ama uses the disc, which tells her that she is an ancestral messenger, that her father will die if he does not return to Ghana, and that her brother will be paralysed if he fights again. Ama and her mother vow to keep this a secret. However, his wife tells Babs about the message and pleads with him to return to Ghana. UK, who also knows about the warnings, asks Babs to return home but he refuses. Ama is accosted by some men on the way to see her elder sister, an affluent nationalist. They both go to a New Awareness Movement concert where they meet Joe.

UK returns to Ghana. Ama warns her brother of the prophecy about his fight. But he needs the winnings to send his father back to Ghana and to free his mother from cleaning. During Joe's fight, Babs collapses and dies; Joe is beaten and taken to hospital in a coma. After her father's



A primal relationship

funeral, Ama sets out to look for him. She meets the "Zulu Warrior", who introduces her to African nationalist groups in London. Ama's mother looks for her at the Notting Hill Carnival, where Ama happily sees her father.

● Hailed as a rare example of 'magic realism', *Ama* seems on the contrary much more mundane in its ambitions, and importantly in its form, than this would suggest. In many ways, it belongs to the long cinema tradition of the psychodrama (from Cocteau and Dulac to Kenneth Anger and Maya Deren); Owusu and Nee-Owoo's first feature film even includes the trance-like state characteristic of the psychodrama when Ama enters her parents' bedroom in the middle of the night as a somnambulist prepared for some sort of ritual. In other words, *Ama* intrigues more as a tale of the coming-of-age and awakening of the young heroine than it does as an exploration of Africans exiled in the ancient imperial city of London.

Sadly, more interesting sub-texts are allowed to drift away: for example, the relationship of the family to Ama's elder sister, and her weak husband, who have embraced Western manners and values and at the same time profound nationalist politics. Equally, Joe's boxing career, which sits oddly in his thoroughly middle-class liberal family, remains an undeveloped plot device. If anything, London is under-used as a setting for Ama's confusion: the use of the Notting Hill Carnival, where Ama purges herself by meeting her father's ghost at the finale, asks us to understand the carnival as a source of ritual and cultural hope (for West Indians and Africans alike?), a view not necessarily associated with it and not sufficiently argued for in the film.

As her family's conscience, Ama represents the film-makers' view of Ghana's relationship to its people as a primal one, inarticulate against the worldly sophistication of the decaying imperial centre. Whether this expresses a situation of hope or frustration on the part of African film-makers is a question for others to answer. But as a film, *Ama* never confronts any of its issues head-on, and by using Ama as the central character makes this avoidance structural. Ama's world is shot through with fantasy, and with the incursion into reality of her ancestral past. In fact, the film's nostalgia for the past, like all forms of sentimentality, implies an unwillingness to engage in reality. The subject is consigned to the realm of inaction, where desire replaces hope.

Michael O'Pray

City of Hope

Certificate

15

Distributor

Mainline

Production Company

Esperanza, Inc

Executive Producers

John Sloss
Harold Welb

Producers

Sarah Green
Maggie Renzi

Production Manager

Sarah Green

Unit Manager

Martha Griffin

Location Manager

Scott Durban

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Heidi Vogel

Casting

Barbara Shapiro

Associate:

Eve Battaglia

Location:

Beth Cooper

Assistant Directors

Masev Apicelli

Greg Jacobs

Bill Martin

Screenplay

John Sayles

Director of

Photography

Robert Richardson

Colour

DuArt

Steadicam Operator

Kyle C. Rudolph

Opticals

The Effects House

Editor

John Sayles

Production Designers

Dan Bishop

Dianna Freas

Art Director

Chas B. Plummer

Set Decorator

Carolyn Cartwright

Set Dressers

Daniel Fisher

Jimi Ryan

Dan Smiley

Key On-set:

Jamie Bishop

2nd On-set:

Maryann Garvin

Art Department

Co-ordinator

Nelle Stokes

Lead Scenic Artist

Janet Kalas

Scenic Artists

Kyler Black

Thomas Haney

Special Effects

Createfex

Dannah Crosby

David Crosby

Jeff Fletcher

Jackie Dewert

Music

Mason Daring

Songs

"Yvonne" by Mason

Daring, performed

by Dennis Brennan;

"Peace of Mind" by

John Presiosa, Michael

Fields, Warren Walcott,

performed by Top

Choice Clique; "Calle

Loca" by John Sayles,

Bill Novick, Mason

Daring, performed by

Alex Alvia; "Oh Marie"

by Eduardo DiCapua,

"Buona Sera" by Carl

Sigman, Peter DeRose,

performed by Louis

Prima; "As One"

by Mason Daring,

performed by Denis

"Fly" Amero; "I Want It

Back" by Mason

Daring, performed

by Jace Alexander;

"Don't Leave a Single

Clue" by Mason

Daring, performed

by Adam Maffie,

Masev Daring; "Body

Language" by Larry

Luddecke, Mason

Daring, performed

by Dee Dee Stewart;

"Highway Patrol"

by Ron Llewellyn;

"All for Nothing,

Our Balls to the Wall"

by Mason Daring,

performed by The Band

That Time Forgot;

"Fearless" by Gary

Nicholson, Wally

Wilson, Brian Stolz,

performed by the

Neville Brothers

Costume Design

John Dunn

Wardrobe

Ursula Schrader

Supervisor

Ursula Schrader

Make-up

Supervisor:

Rose Chatterton

Artist:

Sarah Mays

Additional:

Lynn Heyman

Teresa Reynolds

Linda Wilt

Kelly Yurko

Supervising Sound

Editor

Skip Lievsay

Sound Editor

Philip Stockton

Foley Editor

Bruce Pross

Sound Recordist

Scott Breindel

Dolby stereo

Production

Assistants

Key:

Frank Ferro

Richard E. Wentz

Set:

Rochelle Gross

Kevin Jackson

Unit:

Ralph Renzi

Office:

Nigel Cox-Hagan

Ajay Date

John Bradley

Nichol Simmons

Cast

Vincent Spano

Nick Rinaldi

Joe Morton

Wynn

Tony Lo Bianco

Joe Rinaldi

Barbara Williams

Angela

Stephen Mendillo

Yoyo

Chris Cooper

Riggs

Charlie Yanko

Stavros

Jace Alexander

Bobby

Todd Graff

Zip

Scott Tiler

Vinnie

John Sayles

Carl

Frankie Faison

Levonne

Gloria Foster

Jeanette

Tom Wright

Malik

Angela Bassett

Reesha

David Strathairn

Asteroid

Maggie Renzi

Connie

Marianne Leone

Joann

S.J. Lang

Bauer

Anthony John

Denison

Rizzo

Kevin Tighe

O'Brien

Eileen Lynch

Dawn

Bob North

District Attorney

Michael Mantell

Zimmer

Randle Mell

Simms

Josh Mostel

Mad Anthony

Jojo Smollett

Desmond

Edward Jay

Townsend Jnr

Tito

Joe Grifasi

Pauly

Louis Zorich

Mayor Baci

Steven Randazzo

Gus

Gina Gershon

Laurie

Miriam Colon

Mrs Ramirez

Rose Gregorio

Pina

Daryl Edwards

Franklin

Jude Ciccolella

Paddy

Jaime Tirelli

Fuentes

Serafin Jovet

Ramirez

Mason Daring

Peter

Olga Merediz

Nidia

Bill Raymond

Les

John Griesemer

Thomas

Bernard Canepari

Stroczyk

Blair Shannon

Security Guard

Tony Davis

Kyle

Jon De Vries

Dean Milford

Ginny Yang

Suzanne

Lawrence Tierney

Kerrigan

Maeve Kinkead

Christine

Dale Carman

Roger

Ray Aranha

Errol

John Farris

Kevin

11,688 feet

130 minutes

USA 1991

Director: John Sayles

● Hudson City, New Jersey. Nick, son of Italian building contractor Joe Rinaldi, walks out on a construction job in a gesture of independence. He is approached by Bobby and Zip, musicians-turned-crooks, to be getaway driver for the burglary of Mad Anthony's electronics store, which has been arranged by Carl, a garage owner/hoodlum crippled in a car crash caused by Nick's elder brother Tony, who died in Vietnam. Joe owns L Street, a decaying slum that has been targeted for demolition to make room for a high-profit business project. He refuses to evict the no-hope tenants, despite pressure from Mayor Baci. Baci needs to push through the redevelopment because Assistant District Attorney Zimmer, who is involved in the deal, has threatened to expose the mayor's administration for feather-bedding and nepotism.

Moderate black councilman Wynn has just got his brother-in-law Franklin a job as night security guard with Mad Anthony. At a gig where Bobby and Zip are performing, Nick meets Angela, a girl he knew in high school, who was once married to Rizzo, an unstable local cop. The robbery is bungled and Franklin apprehends Bobby and Zip, but Nick gets away. Desmond and Tito, black kids from L Street, are harassed by beat cops, and in the park on the way home, Tito expresses his frustration by mugging Les, a professor who works with Reesha, Wynn's wife.

Bobby and Zip are arrested, but refuse to name Nick as the third man. However, O'Brien, a politically ambitious detective, manages to get Carl to inform. He then turns Nick over to Baci's faction, so that Joe will have to agree to demolish L Street in return for getting Nick off. Desmond and Tito, who have also been arrested, allege that

◀ L Street and leads a march on a mayoral dinner, where he questions Baci about the deal. Rizzo bumps into Nick on the street and, following an argument, shoots him. Nick finds Joe at the construction site where he used to work, and they talk about their shared guilt over the L Street fire. Joe realises that Nick is badly wounded but his son won't let him leave. His cries for help are heard only by the deranged vagrant Asteroid.

● Inevitably inviting comparison with the sprawling, multi-character 70s films of Robert Altman, John Sayles' *City of Hope* is quite different in intent and effect. Whereas Altman approached politics obliquely through generic conventions, Sayles explicitly uses political issues to explore private ones. Caught in a complex web of corruption in which elected officials, ex-office holders, ward-healers and constituents interact in a creaky political machine that extends from golf course to police cell, his characters are haunted by their failed relationships, by the past and by family ties.

City of Hope, following *The Brother from Another Planet*, *Eight Men Out* and *Matewan*, depicts a system mired in dishonesty for generations, with the Italians taking over from the Irish as the hidden rulers of the city and the blacks hustling to take their place. But the most corrupt of Sayles' politicians have some noble motives, while the most apparently honest are potentially crooked. Wynn's crucial conversation with Errol, a black mayor who resigned rather than face the kind of corruption charges Zimmer is holding over Baci, reveals that even the well-intentioned Wynn was implicated in the feather-bedding of Errol's twelve-year régime. Wynn's subsequent 'heroic' confrontation with Mayor Baci, which is cut away from before the mayor can answer the councilman's

pointed accusations, is overshadowed by his earlier acts of nepotism.

The interconnectedness of all the film's characters is reminiscent of the gritty soap of *Hill Street Blues* (evoked by the presence of *Hill Street* semi-regular and all-purpose genre icon Lawrence Tierney). The storyline progresses like a chain of knocked-over dominoes, with each event depending on other events and each character linked with all the others. The pattern is reinforced by camera movements which follow one character then switch to another just as the new character takes centre screen, binding together the vast *dramatis personae*. Sayles throws in a handful of scenes whose only purpose is to make links between characters more apparent, as in the meeting between Nick and Franklin, when they fool around with a basketball and discuss Nick's dead brother Tony. Tony's transformation from high-school hero through drunk driver to Vietnam casualty is the trigger for the story.

As usual, Sayles enlivens the conventions through his sure touch with characterisation, both in the non-stereotyped scripting and his confident direction of the large cast, several of whom are on the point of cementing their Sayles-bred screen images. Among the Sayles trademarks are his own appearance in a carefully selected role, small but vital and peppered with laugh lines, and a habit of playing tricks on the audience – as when the cop Rizzo hassles Nick with accusations we take to be about his activities as a getaway driver, but which turn out to refer to the affair Rizzo assumes Nick is having with his ex-wife Angela.

Slightly too arch, perhaps, in the pointedly ambiguous resolutions of Nick and Wynn's stories, *City of Hope* is nevertheless a major film, suggesting that Sayles might become as significant a film-maker for the 90s as Altman was for the 70s.

Kim Newman



Toppled dominoes: Tony Lo Bianco, Vincent Spano

Frankie & Johnny



Coupled already...

Certificate

15

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Paramount

Executive Producers

Alexandra Rose

Charles Mulvehill

Producer

Garry Marshall

Co-producer

Nick Abdo

Production Office

Co-ordinators

Patricia S. Chapman

New York:

Jane Nerlinger Evans

Production Manager

New York:

Celia Costas

Unit Production

Manager

Patricia Churchill

Location Managers

Robin Citrin

New York:

Paul Zulkowicz

2nd Unit Director

Nick Abdo

Casting

Lynn Stalmaster

Michael Orloff

Voice:

Sandy Holt

Mimi Maynard

Assistant Directors

Ellen H. Schwartz

Bettiann Fishman

Nandi Bowe

2nd Unit:

Nandi Bowe

Screenplay

Terrence McNally

Based on his play

Frankie and Johnny in

the Clair de Lune

Director of

Photography

Dante Spinotti

Colour

Technicolor

2nd Unit Director of

Photography

Steve Yaconelli

Camera Operators

Louis Barlia

Jeffrey Laszlo

New York:

Peter Norman

Editors

Battie Davis

Jacqueline Cambas

Associate Editor

Brian L. Chambers

Production Designer

Albert Brenner

Art Director

Carol W. Wood

Set Design

Harold L. Fuhrman

Set Decorators

Kathe Klopp

New York:

Kathleen Dolan

Set Dresser

New York:

Tom McDermott

Production

Illustrator

Leon Harris

Special Effects

Supervisor

Thomas R. Ward

Special Effects

Personnel

Dan Lester

Music

Marvin Hamlisch

Music Extracts

"Clair de Lune" by

Claude Debussy

Orchestrations

Torrie Zito

Music Supervisor

G. Mark Roswell

Music Co-ordinator

Xavier DuBois

Supervising

Music Editor

Jim Harrison

Music Editor

Joseph S. DeBeasi

Songs

"Frankie and Johnny

(A Man and a

Woman)" by and

performed by Terence

Trent D'Arby;

"Dangerous on the

Dance Floor" by John

E. Mandell, Charles

L. Jordan, performed

by Musto and Bones;

"Slang Yo Thang" by

Robert Tillis, Johnny

Martinez, performed

by The Rhythm;

"What a Fool Believes"

by Michael McDonald,

Kenny Loggins,

performed by The

Doobie Brothers;

"Mustapha" by Donald

Michael Casen, Joseph

M. Porello; "The Devil

Made Me Do It" by

George Kooymans,

Barry Hy, performed

by Golden Earring; "It

Must Be Love" by and

performed by Rikki

Lee Jones; "Saturday

Night (is the Loneliest

Night in the Week"

by Sammy Cahn, Jule

Styne; "Love Shack"

by Frederick

Schneider, Catherine

Pierson, Keith

Strickland, Cindy

Wilson, performed

by B-52's; "Your Love

Just Aint Right" by

Andre Williams,

Reggie Turner, Keith

Williams, performed

by Angel; "Until You

Let Go" by Marvin

Hamlisch, David

Zippel, Peter Beckett,

performed by Peter

Beckett, Jeanette

Clinger

Costume Design

Rosanna Norton

Wardrobe

Supervisor:

Mary E. Still

Julian M. Smith

Key:

Elinor C. Bardoche

Make-up

Al Pacino:

Sheryl Berkoff

Michelle Pfeiffer:

Naomi Beth Dunne

Nadia DiPaolo

Body:

Nadege F. Schoenfeld

New York:

(Michelle Pfeiffer)

Bernadette Mazur

Title Design

R/Greenberg

Associates

Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

Supervising

Sound Editors

Alan Robert Murray

Dialogue:

Karen Spangenburg

Sound Editors

Neil Burrow

Larry Carow

John Colwell

Marshall Winn

Dialogue:

Andre Bacha

Lucy Coldsnow

Karen Wilson

Supervising

ADR Editor

Joe Mayer

ADR Editor

Devon Curry

Foley Editor

Butch Wolf

Sound Recordists

Keith A. Wester

Andrea Lakin

Samuel F. Kaufman

2nd Unit:

John Carter III

New York:

James Sabat

Foley:

Greg Curda

ADR:

Bob Baron

Tom O'Connell

Music:

Dan Wallin

Dolby stereo

Consultant:

Steve F. B. Smith

Sound Re-recordists

Andy Nelson

Steve Pederson

Don Digirolamo

Foley Artists

Ken Dufva

David Lee Fein

Production

Assistants

Wendy S. Hallin

Jono

Zachary Weintraub

Diane Burstein

Marco Orozco

Caryn E. Campbell

Connie Fredricks

Pattie Lewis

Anne M. Mirch

Post-production:

David Landau

2nd Unit:

Gena Bravos

New York:

Susan Rossi

Matt Weiner

Aaron Sadovskiy

Donald Murphy

Frederic B. Clark IV

Christo Morse

Cast
Al Pacino
 Johnny
Michelle Pfeiffer
 Frankie
Hector Elizondo
 Nick
Nathan Lane
 Tim
Jane Morris
 Nedda
Greg Lewis
 Tino
Al Fann
 Luther
Glenn Plummer
 Peter
Sean O'Bryan
 Bobby
Fernando Lopez
 Jorge
Ele Keats
 Artemis
Phil Leeds
 Mr DeLeon
K Callan
 Frankie's Mother
Shannon Wilcox
 Christine the Hooker
Kate Nelligan
 Cora
Tim Hopper
 Lester
Harvey Miller
 Mr Rosen
Goldie McLaughlin
 Waitress Helen
Marvin Braverman
 Officer Joe
Calvin Jung
 Officer Lee
Frank Campanella
 Retired Customer
Julie Paris
 Pregnant Customer
Allan Kent
 Racetrack Customer
Bud Markowitz
 Juggler Customer
Elizabeth Kerr
 Senior Citizen
 Customer
Marty Nadler
 Rude Customer
Jeff Michalski
 Seizure Customer
Diane Frazen
 Whispering Customer
 Marge
Hyman Fishman
 Cora's Customer
Ronny Hallinn
 Biker Customer
Harvey Keenan
 Salesman Customer
Pricilla Phillips
 Joy Rosenthal
Joy Rosenthal
 Snooty Customers
Robert Brunner
 Accident Driver
Mark Scarola
 Garment Worker
Karin Calabro
 Dental Technician
Flora Berniker
 Flora
Steve Restivo
 Night Cook
Nick Gambella
 Night Busboy
Hope Alexander-Willis
 Barbara Mealy
Barbara London
 Night Waitresses
Al Sapienza
 Peter's Room-mate
Diana Kent
 Nick's Wife
Tracy Reiner
 Attorney at Party
Eugenia Bravos
 Grandma
Gena Bravos
 Shirley Kirks
 Greek Dancers

Joli Lallo
 Jorge's Girlfriend
Ira Glick
 Mutzie Calish
Dey Young
 Johnny's Ex-wife
Paul Tinder
 New Husband
Barbara Marshall
 Helen's Nurse
Scott A. Marshall
 Sidewalk Preacher
Karen Case Cook
 Megaphone Lady
Shawn Frank
 McLean
 Penny Pitcher
John Goldman
 Parking Lot Owner
Ashley Baynes
 Valery Baynes
 Johnny's Daughter
Paul Allison
 Richard Allison
 Johnny's Son
Blanche Bronte
 Lorna Thayer
 Flower Vendors
Mychael Bates
 Flower Driver
Terry Sigrist
 Lori Sigrist
 Bowling Twins
Zachary Weintraub
 Handsome Bowler
Laurie Quinn
 Pretty Girl Bowler
Gordon Belson
 Marlon the Disc
 Jockey
Lucinda Crosby
 The Abused
 Neighbour
Shane Ross
 Richard Gillis
 Sexy Neighbours
Robert Ball
 Haircombing
 Neighbour
Lou Evans
 Barbara Nabozny
 Eating Couple
Frank Buxton
 Minister
De Dee Pfeiffer
 Frankie's Cousin
Mark Raducci
 Cousin's Husband
Bill Applebaum
 Baby's Godfather
Keith Martell
 Sophie von
 Haselberg
 Party Children
Betiann Fishman
 Aunt Betty
Lori Marshall
 Party Guest
Krista H. Davis
Kelly McCray
Blair Richwood
 Bus Riders

10,616 feet
118 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Garry Marshall

New York. Frankie is a waitress at the Apollo Café, a cheap downtown diner. She leads a lonely city life, travelling between work and her small apartment. Johnny has just been released from jail where he spent eighteen months for attempted fraud. He arrives in New York looking for work, and is hired as a short order chef at the Apollo by the kindly proprietor, Nick. The appearance of a new face causes a small stir amongst the waitresses, but the event is eclipsed by the collapse and eventual death of Helen, one of the old hands.

Frankie and her fellow workers Cora and Nedda are surprised to see Johnny at Helen's funeral. At the café, Johnny proves to be a flirt with all the waitresses. Cora takes him home for a one-night fling, but Johnny is more interested in Frankie and tries to ask her out. She refuses but this does not stop him from turning up at her apartment to accompany her to a staff party. Persuaded by her neighbour and best friend Tim, Frankie goes out with Johnny.

After an evening of amiable banter, Johnny walks Frankie home. Amiable turns to passionate and Johnny stays over. Back at work, though, things turn sour as Frankie starts to resent Johnny's attentions. Johnny, meanwhile, is shaken by a visit to his ex-wife and children. He drives away without talking to them, feeling that he no longer has a place in their lives. Johnny continues to pursue a reluctant Frankie, and she finally confesses to him that she has

not recovered from an emotional and physical trauma inflicted on her by an ex-boyfriend. But Johnny woos Frankie and they come to an understanding. She is finally able to find a place for him in her heart as well as in her home.

With the male of the species neither dead nor dying (as has been the current vogue), *Frankie & Johnny* could be described as a truly classic romance. In Terrence McNally's adaptation of his own stage play, Frankie is just a good old-fashioned emotional cripple who has had the life literally almost beaten out of her by a past partner and who now waits to be redeemed from a guarded life of takeouts and video evenings by the love of a good – if also slightly rattled – man. A brief opening sequence suggests – as it flicks between scenes of Frankie Greyhounding home to visit family and Johnny leaving jail – that the two lives are miserably interchangeable. They have both done their time in prisons of one sort or another, and as Johnny muses in reference to the infamous song, Frankie and Johnny were a couple before they met.

But rather than zooming in on the minutiae and making a cinematic virtue of the hothouse atmosphere, director Garry Marshall and McNally allow the story to lumber along as though the star names spoke for themselves. Michelle Pfeiffer is made up to appear like a wan swan rather than having the striking but not necessarily classical good looks that the role seems to demand. As the love story unfolds,

the layers of grease that seem to have been plastered in her hair are stripped away. But while there is almost more method in the make-up, Pfeiffer's performance does convincingly suggest a character whose scarred but hardened exterior conceals the rawest of bruises. Meanwhile, Al Pacino takes the part of Johnny in a gentle stride – a fortysomething 'failure' who is more sweet than bitter (unlike Pacino's single man adrift in the equally lonely and frantic New York of *Sea of Love*).

Marshall and McNally, however, try to extend what was originally a two-hander (the roles specifically created for Kathy Bates and F. Murray Abraham). This merely undermines the tension between the two bewildered protagonists, and the bunch of freshly added support characters reek of old stock – Nick, the kindly, paternal café proprietor; Nedda, the grouchy older waitress who hasn't quite lost her sense of fun; Cora, the sassy 'man-eater' (Kate Nelligan doing a passable imitation of Cher), and – not forgetting that a girl's best friend is her gay neighbour – Tim. The most cinematic but all too knowing excursion is through the rear window of Frankie's apartment. This Ms Lonelyhearts has a room with a view of a chorus of relationships silently caught up in their own happiness or despair. With such a crowd of affable people, plus a host of eccentric regulars who visit the cheery café, the film seems to be already gearing up for the sit-com spin-off.

Lizzie Francke



...Michelle Pfeiffer, Al Pacino

Hangin' with the Homeboys

Certificate 15
Distributor Palace Pictures
Production Company New Line Cinema
Executive Producer Janet Grillo
Producer Richard Brick
Executive in Charge of Production Deborah Moore
Production Co-ordinator Maureen Kleinman
Production Manager Charles D. Darby
Location Manager Yvonne Woods
Post-production Supervisor Joe Fineman
Casting Deborah Aquila
Associate: Alison Zimet
Extras: Kimberly Davis
Assistant Directors Howard McMaster Jeannette E. Scheibe
Screenplay Joseph B. Vasquez
Director of Photography Anghel Decca
Colour Metrocolor
Camera Operator Additional: Joseph Gallagher
Editor Michael Schweitzer
Art Director Isabel Bau Madden
Set Decorator Anne Czerwinski
Set Dressers Liz McGarrity Lisa Houle Steven Lake
Scenic Artist Laura Berringer
Special Effects Co-ordinator Steve Kirschoff
Music/Songs "What Is Black" by Billy Davenport, Stephen Theard, performed by Billy Box; "Porque no unirmos" by Thomas Kukulies, Roberto Herrador; "Cha cha pa'los bailadores" by Georg Corman, Roberto Herrador; "Muchas gracias" by Thomas Kukulies, Mario DiCarra, performed by Salsa Picante; "Can You Dig It" by Alfred Smith, Jerry Winn, performed by Brenton Wood; "Swingin'" by Craig Williams, Akeem Muhammad, performed by Prince Akeem; "Vacate the Premises" by Kavon Shah, The Zawk, performed by The Zawk; "Llego mijan" by Tito Puente, performed by Tito Puente and His Orchestra; "We Want Some" by L. Campbell, D. Hobbs, M. Ross, C. Wong Won, "Hangin' with the Homeboys and Dr Feelgood" by L. Campbell, M. Ross, D. Hobbs, C. Wong Won, Nikki Sixx, Mick Mars, performed by The 2 Live Crew; "Rocko", "Cheez" by and performed by Anastasio Zapanti; "You Don't Have to Die to Go to Heaven" by Jan Buckingham, performed by Tony Stampley, Pam Tilis;

"Lovey Dovey Kinda Lovin'" by Alfred Smith, Joseph Hooven, Jerry Winn, performed by Brenton Wood; "Do You Believe" by Francis Preve, Michael Licata, James Cammarata, performed by Beat Goes Bang; "Ticket to Heaven" by Steven Ray, Stephen Washington, Roy Freeland, performed by The Knowledge; "Look the Other Way" by Roy Freeland, Lou Pardini, performed by Lou Pardini; "My Heart Is on Standstill" by Taz I.E., No Fisk, Loren B. Chaney, performed by Taz I.E., No Fisk; "Dance All Nite (House Mix)" by P. Walter, J. Thompkins, D. Hobbs, F. Williams, performed by Poison Clan (The Baby 2 Live Crew); "Games" by T. Butler, B. Mohammed, performed by Triner; "Isn't It a Shame" by Roger Ocasio, Nicolai Vorkapich, performed by Latin Gold; "Pretty Girls" by and performed by Stevie B; "Rock Bottom" by Rafael Vargas, performed by 2 in a Room; "Hot for You" by Nicolai Vorkapich, performed by NICO; "Samosa" by and performed by Alexandros; "Stormy Monday" by Aaron "T-Bone" Walker, performed by T-Bone Walker
Music Extract 'Ach, ich fulh's, es ist verschwunden', from *Die Zauberflöte* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, performed by Lucia Popp
Music Co-ordinator Charlie Gillett
Executive Music Producers Joel Sill David Chackler
Music Supervisor Steven Ray
Music Editor Greg Sheldon
Costume Design Mary Jane Fort
Wardrobe Supervisor Wendy Van Dyke
Make-up Judy Chin
Key: Margie Durand
Titles/Opticals The Effects House
Supervising Sound Editor Greg Sheldon
Sound Editor Dialogue: Ray Karpicki
ADR Editor Darrell Hanzalik
Sound Recordist William Sarokin
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordist Mel Zelniker
Sound Effects Editor Eugene Gearty
Foley Artists: Elisha Birnbaum Brian Vancho
Creative Consultant Laurence Schwartz

Production Assistants Roni Ben-Nevat Paul Balderes Prince Jackson Brian Fass Don Scott Omar Villegas
Stunt Co-ordinator Jeff Ward
Stunts Norman Douglass Roy Farfel Jerry Hewitt Chuck Jeffreys David S. Lomax Manny Siverio
Stand-ins John Billeci Christopher Crenna Darryl Robinson J. T. Taylor
Cast
Doug E. Doug Willie
Mario Joyner Tom
John Leguizamo Johnny
Nestor Serrano Vinny
Kimberly Russell Vanessa
Mary B. Ward Luna
Reggie Montgomery Rasta
Christine Clavall Daria
Rosemary Jackson Lila
Steven Randazzo Pedro
LaTanya Richardson Caseworker
Victor Mack Cheryl Freeman
Michelle D. Thomas Telemarketing Operators
Marisol R. Reyes Sara
Natalia Lazarus Paula Garces
Harassed Sisters Anthony Ruiz
Angry Father Victor L. Cook
Louie-Louie Arnold Molina
Rafael Baez Tony Vasquez
Party Tough Guys Marie Barrientos
Party Hostess David E. Weinberg
Tow Truck Driver Gene Canfield
Billy Strong Transit Policemen
Rony Clanton Beggar
Clayton Prince Frederick
Tony Cucci Bouncer
Samantha Carroll Kira Arne
Sandra Berrios Ali Thomas
Disco Women Antone Pagan
Waiter Chic Street Man
Danitra Vance Pool Hall Couple
Jonathan Solomon Bartender
Ellis Williams Bobby

8,032 feet
89 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Joseph B. Vasquez

The South Bronx, New York. Willie and Tom, two African Americans, and Puerto Ricans Vinny and Johnny meet for their weekly boys' night out. Willie is unemployed, Tom is a telephone salesman with aspirations to becoming an actor, Johnny works in a store and Vinny lives off his various girlfriends. They cruise the neighbourhood in Tom's car looking for a good time, but with little success. After being thrown out of a Puerto Rican party for gate-crashing, they resolve to head south for Manhattan.

Opportunities are no better there and, after a series of mishaps, they decide to go home by subway (Tom has driven his car into a brick wall). They are arrested for jumping the subway barriers and before being released are lectured by a policeman on the realities of life. With the help of a Rastaman they get into a racist night-club through the back entrance, only to find themselves socially out of their depth. They return home at daybreak having learned a few useful lessons.

Crudely but humorously, and to some extent unwittingly, young black/Puerto Rican director Joseph Vasquez's portrait of four 'homeboys' deals with aspects of masculinity played down in most other examples of new black cinema. To begin with, the characterisation is deceptively shallow; the boys seem to be concerned only with 'pussy' and having a good time. They are regular guys who want to escape from their restricted social circumstances in any way possible. For Johnny this means trying for a scholarship; Tom hopes to land a big acting role; Vinny has renounced his Hispanic name Fernando because he wants to impress women by passing as Italian; and Willie's ritual response to

discrimination is the comic refrain, "It's because I'm black, right?"

But Vasquez's four heroes journey into their own heart of darkness: Manhattan. Willie predicts disaster and asks to be dropped off in Harlem, the last safe outpost. Although the action takes place over one night, this is not the New York familiar from Scorsese's *After Hours*. When Willie is offered a job in Brooklyn he turns it down because, for him, Brooklyn is the other side of the world.

This emphasis on territory - 'home' - interacts with notions of race and gender to make *Hangin' with the Homeboys* more complex than it at first appears. The boys' derogatory attitude to women (the film is peppered with abusive language like 'ho', 'pussy' and 'bitch') is shown to be based on fear. All four have encounters in Manhattan that shatter their illusions about women and expose their illusions about themselves. When Johnny discovers that the innocent and virginal woman he idealises in the Bronx is in fact a porn queen in Manhattan, the real lesson is not this discovery but Willie's challenging of his fantasy: "You can't hate her for not being what you want her to be".

Unlike Spike Lee, Vasquez does not claim to have answers to all the questions he raises. However, *Hangin' with the Homeboys* is not without problems. The racist stereotyping of Rastafarians recently in evidence in *Thelma & Louise* is unfortunately repeated here. More glaringly, this boy's own movie makes no effort to please the girls. The righteous woman who puts Willie straight about political commitment is no compensation for the female two-timers, love-sick idiots, sex kittens and whores who populate Vasquez's film. This said, the good performances, sharp dialogue and excellent cinematography are still something to savour.

Karen Alexander



No exit: Doug E. Doug, John Leguizamo, Nestor Serrano, Mario Joyner

Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man

Certificate
15
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
MGM
Producer
Jere Henshaw
Co-producer
Don Michael Paul
Line-producer
Donald West
Associate Producer
Missy Alpern
Production Co-ordinator
Suzanne Lore
Unit Production Manager
Donald West
Location Manager
Brian O. Haynes
2nd Unit Director
Billy Burton
Casting
Mike Fenton
Judy Tyler
Valerie Massalas
Associate:
Allison Gordon
2nd Unit:
Extras:
The Casting Group:
Rick Montgomery
Don Parada
Assistant Directors
Robert Rooy
Scott Senchal
Fernando Castroman
2nd Unit:
Scott Senchal
Alex Kramarchuk
Screenplay
Don Michael Paul
Director of Photography
David Egby
Colour
DeLuxe
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Jim Pergola
Matte Photography
Paul Curley
Blue Screen Photography
Jim Aupperle
Camera Operator
William Barber
Steadicam Operator
Andrew Jeff Mart
Special Visual Effects Supervisors
Michael Fink
Robert Grasmere
Special Optical Effects
VCE/Peter Kuran
Motion Control Visual Effects
Ted Rae
Video Displays
Video Image
Matte Artists
Rocco Giotre
Jesse Silver
Matthew Yurichich
Ken Allen
Additional Matte Composites
David Stipes
Productions
Anthony Doublin
Editor
Corky Ehlers
Production Designer
Paul Peters
Art Director
Lisette Thomas
Set Design
Siobhan Rooome
Set Decorator
Lynn Wolverton Parker
Set Dressers
Wren Boney
Sheri Watson
Storyboard Artist
Peter Lloyd
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Terry Frazee
Music
Basil Poledouris
Music Supervisors
Peter Afterman
Diane DeLouise Wessel
Music Editor
Tom Villano
Songs
"Wanted Dead or Alive"
by Jon Bon Jovi, Richie Sambora, performed by Bon Jovi; "The Bigger They Come" by Peter Frampton, Steve Marriott, John Regan, performed by Peter

Frampton, Steve Marriott; "Let's Work Together" by Wilbert Harrison, performed by The Kentucky Headhunters; "Long Way from Home" by Loyd Neil Carswell, performed by Copperhead; "Stop the World" by Gleason, Woseen, "C'Mon" by Gleason, Lara, performed by The Screaming Jets; "What Will I Tell My Heart" by Tinturin, Gordon, Lawrence, performed by Vanessa Williams; "The Better Part of Me" by Derek Bramble, Jimmy Scott, "Work to Do" by Ronald Isley, O'Kelly Isley, Rudolph Isley, performed by Vanessa Williams; "Wild Obsession" by M. Cripps, T. Guns, P. Lewis, K. Nickels, S. Riley, performed by L.A. Guns; "Hardline" by Tom Kimmel, Dennis Morgan, performed by Waylon Jennings; "Ride with Me" by Dean Davidson, performed by Blackeyed Susan
Costume Design
Richard Shissler
Wardrobe Supervisor
Austin Myers
Wardrobe
George Cooper
Mickey Rourke:
Yvonne Cervantes
Don Johnson:
Gregory B. Pena
2nd Unit:
Arthur Brouillard
Make-up
Karen Iverson
Key:
Perri Sorel
Mickey Rourke:
Edward Ternes
Don Johnson:
Jay Cannistraci
Titles/Opticals
F Stop
Sound Design
Tim Chau
Supervising Sound Editor
Tim Chau
Sound Editors
Terry Rodman
David Kern
Sukey Fontelleu
David Spence
Peter Tomaszewicz
Jeremy Gordon
Burness Speakman
Dialogue:
Don Hall
John Phillips
Hal Sanders
ADR Supervisor
J. Christopher Jargo
ADR Editors
Jimmy Ling
Pieter S. Hubbard
Kirk Schuler
Foley Editors
Andrew Kopetzky
John Carr
Sound Recordists
Don Johnson
Music:
Tim Boyle
2nd Unit:
Brent Johnson
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Robert J. Litt
Elliot Tyson
Greg Russell
Sound Effects
Kim Waugh
Foley Artists
Ellen Heuer
Chris Moriana
Jeff Wilhoit
Jim Moriana
Production Assistants
Conte Mark Matal
Kelly Householder
Office:
Kam Turrou
Mary Ann D'Achille

Stunt Co-ordinator
Billy Burton
Aerial Sequences Co-ordinator
Kevin LeRosa
Stunts
Webster Whinery
Bobby Foxworth
Keii Johnson
Jeff Jensen
David Burton
Bill Burton
Rick Shuster
Jophery Clifford Brown
John Hately
John Escobar
Steve Kelso
Hal Burton
Steve Chambers
Shawn Bryan
Troy Johnston
Thomas Rosales
Tierre Turner
Simone Boisseree
Bob Brown
William H. Burton
Noon Orsatti
Dennis Scott
Helicopter Stunt Pilots
Steve Geray
Diamond Farnsworth
Rick Kline
Animal Trainer
Robert Dunn's Animal Rentals
Cast
Mickey Rourke
Harley Davidson
Don Johnson
Robert Lee Anderson,
Marlboro Man
Chelsea Field
Virginia Slim
Daniel Baldwin
Alexander
Giancarlo Esposito
Jimmy Jiles
Vanessa Williams
Lulu Daniels
Robert Ginty
Thom
Tia Carrere
Kimiko
Julius Harris
Old Man
Eloy Casados
José
Big John Studd
Jack Daniels
Tom Sizemore
Chance Wilder
Mitzi Martin
The Woman
Kelly Hu
Suzie
James Nardini
Punk with Gun
Brenan T. Baird
Punk with Knife
Branscombe Richmond
Big Indian
Stacey Elliott
Indian's Girlfriend
Hans Howe
Bartender
Bobbie Tyler
Stripper
Marlin Dorton
Arm Wrestler
Jordan Lund
Steve Tannen
Guards
Billy D. Lucas
John
Sven-Ole Thorsen
David
Dennis Scott
Peter
Cody Glenn
Michael
Michele Laybourn
Honey
Debbie Lynn Ross
Michael Valverde
Luggage Jockeys
Stan Ivar
Jake McAllister
Stan Chambers
R. J. Chambers
Henchmen
Theresa San-Nicholas
Hitch-hiker
Sean "Hollywood" Hamilton
Disc Jockey
8,845 feet
98 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Simon Wincer

1996. Two drifters, a philosophical biker known as Harley Davidson and an ex-rodeo cowboy, Robert Lee Anderson, who chooses to be called the Marlboro Man, meet in Las Vegas and head for Burbank to revisit their favourite hang-out, the Rock 'n' Roll Bar and Grill. The Old Man, who runs the bar, tells them that he has to come up with two-and-a-half million dollars to renew the lease, or forfeit the place to Chance Wilder's bank, which plans to develop the lot.

With the other regulars - Jimmy Jiles, José and Jack Daniels - Harley and Marlboro heist one of the bank's armoured cars, tangling with Alexander and the bank's team of almost invincible security men. They find, however, that they have stolen not money but a fantastically valuable cache of Crystal Dream, a powerfully addictive and lethal new drug. After the robbery, Marlboro spends the night with Virginia Slim, his policewoman girlfriend, and is told that she plans to marry someone else because she can no longer put up with his footloose ways.

Harley and Marlboro visit the bank, and arrange to exchange the drugs for the two-and-a-half million dollars at midnight in a local aeroplane graveyard. After the exchange has been made, Alexander tracks the robbers by following a bugged dollar coin, which has been included in the ransom to pay off a personal bet between Harley and Marlboro as to the success of their scheme. A shoot-out destroys the Rock 'n' Roll and leaves the Old Man, Jimmy Jiles, José and Jack Daniels dead.

Harley and Marlboro flee to Las Vegas, with Alexander in pursuit, and manage to escape. Deciding that they have to even the score for their dead friends, they lure Alexander to the aeroplane graveyard and gun his

armour-raincoated team down. Buying off Thom, Alexander's helicopter pilot, they are ferried to the bank building, where they confront and kill Wilder. Marlboro returns to the rodeo, and Harley takes to the road again...

To work, this testosterone-fuelled comic-strip action movie - whose 1996 owes less to the s-f of *Mad Max* or *Blade Runner* than to the kind of 'imaginary America' seen in *Streets of Fire* - needs the demented directorial enthusiasm and skill at arms of a Walter Hill or a John Milius. With the usually humane Simon Wincer - riding high from his Western successes with *Lonesome Dove* and *Quigley Down Under* - at the helm, the results are ultimately stultifying. After a promisingly camp introductory reel, in which a succession of macho characters are brought on with grand bar-fight entrances, the film gets bogged down with its mix of science fiction, Western, heist and good ol' boy themes.

A deadening major-studio gloss dresses up the sleaze with too much budget, while the film seems mainly to be setting up its all-too-apt last dialogue exchange, when Mickey Rourke picks up a foxy female hitch-hiker, the latest in the film's procession of disposable and characterless bimbos. After learning that she is heading for "nowhere special", he promises, "Come on, I'll take you there". Among the 'nothing special' ingredients on view are the stars lazily cribbing from their own images and failing to work up much in the way of a buddy team, and a lazily feelgood finale - in the 60s or 70s, a story like this would have had to end with the last rebels dead by the roadside.

Understandably, an opening caption declares "no company has approved, sponsored or endorsed the title or content of this film".

Kim Newman



Dressed up: Mickey Rourke, Don Johnson

Certificate
15
Distributor
First Independent
Production Company
Trans-Tokyo Film Partners
Executive Producers
Edward R. Pressman
Oliver Stone
Co-executive Producers
Hidenori Taga
Katsumi Kimura
Producers
Ilona Herzberg
Hidenori Ueki
Line Producer
Tokyo:
Tatsumi Watanabe
Associate Producers
Janet Yang
Taiichi Inoue
Production Executive
Caldecot Chubb
Production Associate
Kiku Kurahashi
Production Co-ordinators
Paddy Cullen
Majorie Webster
Tokyo:
Masaki Umino
Unit Production Managers
Patricia Whitcher
Tokyo:
Shinji Nukaga
LA:
David Witz
Location Managers
Gerrit Folsom
LA:
Jim Vatis
Post-production Supervisor
Marjorie Webster
2nd Unit Director
Dan Bradley
Casting
Elisabeth Leustig
Associate:
Susan Brown
Pittsburgh:
Donna Belejac
Extras:
Staci Blagovich
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
Terence J. Edwards
Richard Murken
Akiko Sakagami
Michael A. McCue
Fred Donatelli
2nd Unit:
Francis Ronan
Mahoney III
Jim Stubblefield
Tokyo:
Toshiro Inomata
Masashi Iguchi
Katsumi Kameda
LA:
Mara J. Lee
Screenplay
Tim Metcalfe
Story
Hiroaki Yoshida
Tim Metcalfe
Based on the short story "In a Grove" by Ryunosuke Akutagawa
Director of Photography
Morio Saequsa
Colour
CFI
2nd Unit Photography
Peter Lyons Collister
Editor
Bonnie Koehler
Production Designers
Toby Corbett
Japan:
Toro Ueno
Art Director
Gary Kosko
Set Decorator
Diana Stoughton
Set Dressers
Greg Jones
John Butler

On-set:
Chris Call
Art Department Co-ordinator
Elizabeth Flaherty
Scenic Artist
Eileen Garrigan
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Marty Bresin
Special Effects
Special Effects Unlimited:
Dale Ettema
Scott Sand
Jeffrey Knott
Francis Ayre
Werner Hahnlein
Models
Don Yochum
Music
Stanley Myers
Orchestrations
Simon Chamberlain
Graham Preskett
Music Supervisors
Austin Ince
Peter Afterman
Dawn Soler
Diane DeLouise
Wessel
Music Associates
Richard Harvey
Nick Glennie-Smith
Music Editor
Thomas Drescher
Songs
"The End (At the End of the Rainbow)" by Sid Jacobson, Jimmy Krondes, performed by Earl Grant; "Joe Magarac" by Jacob A. Evanson, performed by Gabriel Damon; "Take Me Home" by Jonathan Sheldon, Nick Sample, Hugh Mangum, performed by Vertical Smile; "Yankee Doodle Music Box" (traditional), performed by Dane A. Davis; "Hotel Harp Music" by and performed by Dane A. Davis; "Are You Near Me" by Marty Blasick, performed by David Van Norden
Costume Design
Susie DeSanto
Costumer
Susan Kistler
Wardrobe
Takako Ikura
Make-up
Key:
Deborah Larsen
LA:
Felicity Bowring
Prosthetic Make-up Effects
Alterian Studios
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
Christopher Sheldon
Sound Editors
Randy Vandergrift
Richard Cadger
Kimberley Voigt
ADR Editor
G.W. Brown
Foley Editors
Nicholas Forshager
Valerie Davidson
Sound Recordists
Stephen Halbert
Rich Gooch
Jeannette Browning
ADR/Foley Recordists
Jon Hussein
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Wayne Heitman
Frank Montano
Aaron Rochin
Sound Transfers
Marita Goldsmith
Sound Effects Editors
Kini Kay
Stewart Nelsen
Todd Toon

Foley Artists
Gregg Barbanell
Joan Rowe
Production Assistants
James G. Schmidt II
George Simpson
Jonathan L. Peters
Gabrielle Geier
Taro Morishima
Perri Pivovar
Patrick Richert
Stunt Co-ordinator
Dan Bradley
Stunts
Dan Bradley
Scott Alan Cook
Lori Lynn Ross
Donna Evans
Tommy Tanaka
Chuck Clarke
Terry Jackson
Bill Ryusaki
Rick Barker
Marty Bresin
Animal Trainer
Stacy Regan
Film Extract
Bad Day at Black Rock (1954)
Cast
Jeff Fahey
Barry Mikowski
Bridget Fonda
Chris Sugita
Hiroaki Murakami
Junichi Sugita
J.T. Walsh
Jack Ruhle
Gabriel Damon
Mikey
John Randolph
Mayor Peluso
Peter Allas
Eddie
Carmen Filpi
Charlie
Francis John Thornton
Womack
Jeffrey J. Stephan
Councilman
Mark Lowenthal
Dr Rathman
Goh Misawa
Tanazaki
J. Michael Hunter
Louis
Lenora Nemetz
Marge
Steve Aronson
Jo Jo
Zachary Mott
Bud
Michael R. Aubele
Ray
John Hall
Dean E. Wells
Bar Players
Alice G. Eisner
Neddie
Don Wadsworth
Hotel Manager
Douglas Pona
Hotel Clerk
Maria Becoates-Bay
Dispatcher
Rohn Thomas
Doctor
Patricia Hicok
Lee Hayes
Saundra Mason
Nurses
Craig Hosking
Helicopter Pilot
David W. Butler
Steelworker
Lamont Arnold
Watkins
Lonzo Green
Norman
Laverne M. Yorkgits
Waitress
Joseph Chapman
Judi Durand
Greg Finley
J.D. Hall
Rosanna Huffman
Barbara Iley
Tina Lifford
David McCharen
Jan Rabson
Additional Voices
9,207 feet
102 minutes

USA/Japan, 1991

Director: Hiroaki Yoshida

Corinth, Pennsylvania. Junichi Sugita, the son of a billionaire Japanese businessman, is found with a near-fatal head wound at an abandoned steel mill: ex-steel worker turned bell-hop Barry Mikowski tells police chief Jack Ruhle that he killed Sugita in self-defence. The day before, Sugita was shown round the mill by local dignitaries, where he glimpsed Mikey, an abandoned boy whose father used to work there. The mayor tells Ruhle that the next day Sugita left a business meeting after receiving a mysterious phone call. Sugita's American wife, Chris, calls Ruhle from her car phone to say that Barry killed her husband: she met Barry at the hotel, he later defended her and Sugita in a local bar, then the next day Barry forced her to drive him to the mill, to watch him kill Sugita.

Ruhle lies to Barry, saying that Chris has claimed he raped her. Otherwise, Barry's version of events is close to hers, with additional details about Sugita's plans to build an amusement park on the mill site. When Chris phones again, Ruhle and Barry listen on the speakerphone: she says that the night before the incident, her husband received a phone call from his father instructing him to abandon his plans for an amusement park. Later, she and Barry met in secret, then the following day stole her husband's car and, prior to leaving for California, made love at the mill, observed by Mikey. While visiting the mill the day before, Sugita had been abused by Mikey after saying that steel production there was finished.

After visiting Sugita in hospital, Chris tells Ruhle she tried to kill her husband: while making love with Barry in her husband's car, she inadvertently dialled Sugita's office number on the one-touch car phone.



Whole truth: Jeff Fahey, Bridget Fonda

Her husband overheard their love-making and Mikey subsequently phoned Sugita to tell him their whereabouts. At the mill, Sugita and Barry argued and fought with a knife and iron bar, until Chris dropped a metal object on her husband's head. Ruhle visits the now conscious Sugita and tape-records his version of events. He then takes Barry to the mill, where – after Barry saves the fleeing Mikey from a fall – the truth is revealed. Sugita and Barry fought, Chris tried to intervene, and when Sugita pulled a knife on Barry on one of the overhead walkways, Mikey grabbed his leg and accidentally caused him to fall. Ruhle, deciding that Mikey saved Barry's life, declares the case closed.

While one hesitates to mention *Rashomon* in the same breath as this laboured Japanese/American co-production, the debt owed by Tim Metcalfe's convoluted screenplay to Ryunosuke Akutagawa's "In a Grove", which inspired Kurosawa's 1951 film, is fairly obvious. However, where *Rashomon* focused on the philosophical question of the subjective nature of truth, here the story attempts to embrace the whole of American-Japanese economic and cultural relations since the Second World War. The steel mill that made munitions to fight the Japanese is about to be bought by a rich Japanese businessman who, far from wishing to revive the steel-making that was once the economic heart of the community, wants instead to buy into the American Dream and build his own Disneyworld.

Sundance Institute graduate Hiroaki Yoshida fudges the issues, distinguishing Sugita the dreamer from his ruthless, avaricious father and undermining Barry's resentment by suggesting that his seemingly justified hatred of Sugita is based on a misconception. Despite the 'Rust Belt' setting and the awesome power of the abandoned steel mill, the emphasis is less on social questions than on the central characters' emotional lives.

The film's political message comes through most strongly in the scenes involving Barry and his surrogate son Mikey, which have a mythic dimension. Mikey identifies Barry with a legendary steel-worker, Joe Magarac, and looks to his idolised mentor to revive the moribund steel mill that has now become his home. There is an important film to be made about the impact of foreign, particularly Japanese, economic investment on America's beleaguered industrial, blue-collar communities. But, like Ron Howard's *Gung Ho*, this one barely scratches the corroded surface of the Rust Belt problem.

Nigel Floyd



Shifting: Steven Mackintosh, Emer McCourt, Justin Chadwick...

Certificate
18
Distributor
Rank
Production Companies
Working Title
For Polygram
In association with
Film Four
International
Executive Producer
Graham Bradstreet
Producer
Tim Bevan
Co-producer
Judy Hunt
Associate Producer
David Gothard
Production Co-ordinator
Maxine Price
Production Manager
Tania Windsor
Unit Manager
Bill Darby
Location Manager
Tim McDonald
Casting
Joyce Nettles
Assistant Directors
Benita Allen
Peter Heslop
Steve Robinson
Screenplay
Hanif Kureishi
Director of Photography
Ed Lachman
In colour
Editor
Jon Gregory
Production Designer
Stuart Walker
Art Directors
Diane Dancklefsen
Colin Blaymires
Music
Mark Springer
Sarah Sarhandi
Music Extracts
Don Giovanni, Aria
No 18, by Wolfgang
Amadeus Mozart
Music Performed by
Mark Springer
Sarah Sarhandi
Bruce Smith
Music Producer
André Jacquemin
Music Co-ordinator
Charlie Gillett
Songs
"Biting My Nails" by
G. Waite, performed
by Renegade
Soundwave; "Zig It
Up" by and performed
by Ninjaman &
Flourgon; "Soul
Surrender" by Orbit,
Mayer, Conning,
performed by Bass-o-
Matic; "More than I
Know" by Neil Barnes,
performed by
Leftfield; "Guayacil
City" by and
performed by Mano

Negra; "Pocket Porn
Dub" by and
performed
by Renegade
Soundwave; "Baina
Nakhill" by and
performed by Hassan
Erraji; "Your Love"
by and performed
by Michael Prophet,
Ricky Tuffy; "Mustt
Mustt" by and
performed by Nusrat
Fateh Ali Khan;
"Beautiful People"
by and performed
by Stress; "Step into
Time" by
D. Gasparian,
E. Stratton, J. Stratton,
performed by Man
Machine; "Are You
Lonesome Tonight"
by Roy Turk, Lou
Handman; "Make Way
for the Originals" by
and performed by Izit;
"Fast Fish and Loose
Fish (The Bone Mix)"
by Larry Stabbings,
performed by QRZ;
"Rising Above
Bedlam" by Jah
Wobble's Invaders
of the Heart, Michael
Schoots, performed
by Jah Wobble's
Invaders of the Heart;
"The Pleasure and the
Pain" by Ian
McKenzie, Debby
Browne, performed
by Debby Browne
Choreographer
William Tuckett
Costume Design
Amy Roberts
Wardrobe
Gilly Martin
Lynn Horrie
Make-up Supervisor
Sula Loizou
Sound Editor
Sue Baker
Sound Recordists
Albert Bailey
Music:
André Jacquemin
Research Consultant
Glynn Roberts
Stunt Arrangers/Stunts
Andy Bradford
Stuart St Paul
Stand-ins
Celia Radband
Paul Ellison

Cast
Justin Chadwick
Clint
Steven Mackintosh
Emer McCourt
Sylvie
Roshan Seth
Dr Bubba
Fiona Shaw
Headley

Brad Dourif
Hemingway
Tony Haygarth
Burns
Stevan Rimkus
Tom Tom
Eleanor David
Lily
Alun Armstrong
Stone
Nick Dunning
Faulkner
Naveen Andrews
Bike
Garry Cooper
Mr G
Gordon Warnecke
Mr G's Assistant
Evelyn Daggart
Chale Charles
Mr G's Girls
Joseph Alessi
David Hounslow
Plainclothes
Policemen
Ben Peel
DJ at Party
Danny John-Jules
Black Man at Party
Oliver Kester
Black Thug at Party
Paudge Behan
White Thug at Party
Yemi Ajibade
Tramp
Anthony Cairns
Busy Bee
Rowena King
Melanie
Veronica Smart
Sandy McDade
Women Diners
Tracey MacLeod
TV Interviewer
George Miller
Mr Runcipifer
Philip Glenister
Suited Man
Charlie Creed-Miles
Delroy Nunes
Kids in Lift
Karl Collins
Barman
Sean Pertwee
Pippa Hinchley
German Tourists
Steven Lawrence
Drug Dealer
Greg Saunders
Rent Boy
Marianne Jean-Baptiste
Nanny
Sally Whitman
Mother
Leila Whitman
Baby
James Caplan
Boy in Country
Sarah Worth
Girl in Country
Joe England
Young Clint
Dave Atkins
Heavy

9,608 feet
107 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Hanif Kureishi

Clint, a young member of a drug-dealing posse, bumps into Sylvie, an old friend and heroin addict with whom he is half in love. As he asks her to a local 'rave', they are joined by Muffdiver, the leader of the posse, who immediately makes a pass at Sylvie, ignoring the jealous Clint. At the rave, Muffdiver huddles with two associates of Mr G, the main drugs supplier for the area, who is sizing up the posse leader as a possible distributor on the streets. Clint is dragged off by a couple of dealers to whom he owes money; he is stripped and beaten, and after they find money in his shoe, he is thrown into an alleyway.

Clint bemoans his lot: he is naked and broke, Sylvie has been taken from him by his best friend, and it's his twentieth birthday. He resolves from now on to go straight. At a fashionable local diner, he is promised a job as a waiter, but only on condition he turn up in a decent pair of shoes. Muffdiver displays little faith in Clint's ability to scavenge a pair of shoes, and persuades him to break into a building so that the posse can use it as a squat. The place belongs to a local gangster, but despite its high-tech fittings, Clint cannot find any suitable footwear. After noticing Sylvie's clothes neatly laid out beside Muffdiver's, he steals a roll of money from the posse leader and hides it on the roof.

Muffdiver sets up a meeting with Mr G, but his conjuring tricks and smooth talk fail to impress the drug distributor, and the meeting breaks up when Muffdiver discovers that his "upfront investment" has been stolen. The ensuing recriminations only end when the posse leader suggests that it will do them all good to go on an outing to the country. On their return, Clint is informed that the gangster whose flat they are squatting is looking for the posse.

Clint watches helplessly as the gangster's henchmen throw all their possessions into the street, and he realises that he won't be able to recover his stolen shoe money.

He seeks solace at the home of Headley, a woman writer who exploits the young dealer for sex and drugs. He steals a pair of cowboy boots, only to discover at the diner next morning that they belong to his prospective employer, Hemingway. He is given the job anyway, and his first unctuous smile at a customer implies he will be a success in his new occupation.

In his first screenplay, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, Hanif Kureishi provided director Stephen Frears with a strong central focus. The laundrette not only served as a common object of desire for the disparate characters, it also anchored the film in one striking image. In *London Kills Me*, Kureishi's directorial debut, Clint's search for the "true shoe" provides a similar visual metaphor, one that in cinematic terms seems indebted to Susan Seidelman's *Desperately Seeking Susan*, and in terms of the director's own career looks back to *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the novel in which the hero Haroun endlessly tries on new clothes in a comedy of shifting identities. As a motor for the narrative in *London Kills Me*, it also solves one of Kureishi's weaknesses as a scriptwriter: the fact that one scene doesn't always dramatically initiate another.

Kureishi has learnt from the failure of *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* by simplifying the narrative of *London Kills Me* and refusing the temptation to insert polemical and discursive discussions on drugs. This doesn't explain, however, why he has not provided a wider context within the film for the drug theme. Muffdiver's posse operate in a vacuum; they aren't opposed by other gangs in the Notting Hill area, but more ►



...Naveen Andrews, Justin Chadwick

◀ importantly they aren't opposed by the police.

Kureishi compensates for the subsequent lack of tension by concentrating on the relationships between the members of his posse. In the script's offhand humour, a joke is quite often used to propel one scene into another, which is effective whenever Clint is on screen because he is motivated by his pursuit of shoes. But Muffdiver and Sylvie are only motivated from within their own dialogue: they never act out their hopes or react to their fears; they just happen to be there, which leaves the viewer without any sense of the circumstances which rule their lives.

The narrative picks up speed again with the posse's return from the country, and the resumption of Clint's foraging for footwear. At this point, Justin Chadwick's performance moves up a gear, as his naturalistic acting becomes more stylised with his increasingly desperate attempts to go straight. Ed Lachman's camera follows him, holding him in a tight frame which Chadwick often seems to be on the point of bursting out of. In the last scene, the camera pulls back to reveal the price that Clint is already beginning to pay for conformity. The spontaneous street hustler has turned into a clown in waiter's uniform. Clint's obvious ability to 'get on' makes the scene all the more bittersweet. Yet the fate of his friends who decide to continue the life of flight and disguise – dressed as Goths, Muffdiver and Sylvie determine to leave London (Muffdiver costumed as close cousin to Cruickshank's Artful Dodger) – hardly seems preferable.

The complexity and ambiguity of the film's end is matched by the character of the triangular relationship of Clint, Muffdiver and Sylvie. (There is a bath scene with the three of them that clearly refers to Roeg's bath scene in *Performance*.) Like most of the other male characters, Clint gives himself a macho street name, but this scrawny 'Clint Eastwood' is the only one who doesn't get any of the benefits of being macho.

Muffdiver has Sylvie; the owner of the diner, Hemingway, has Headley; and Clint's mother has her Elvis lookalike, Stone. Clint only has the street, which he escapes from, although his new profession still keeps him in Kureishi's moral limboland. A vacuum surrounds this innocent abroad, which Kureishi needs to fill with a story which suits the emotional conflicts and comic mishaps that naturally spring from his *Candide* tales. Then he will have fully integrated his two disciplines, the literary and the cinematic.

Tom Dewe Mathews

Omen IV: The Awakening



The year is always one: Asia Vieira...

Certificate

15

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

FNM Films

Executive Producer

Mace Neufeld

Producer

Harvey Bernhard

Co-producer

Robert Anderson

Production

Co-ordinator

Roberta Sheehy

Production Manager

Michelle MacLaren

Location Managers

Christine Haebler

Mark Flett

2nd Unit Director

Harvey Bernhard

Casting

Melissa Skoff

Associate:

Jeffrey Q. Newman

Canada:

Stuart Aikins

Additional:

Mary Jo Slater

Extras:

James Forsyth

Assistant Directors

Kelsey Howard

Rachel Leiterman

Julia Done

Screenplay

Brian Taggart

Story

Harvey Bernhard

Brian Taggart

Based on characters

created by David

Seltzer

Director of

Photography

Martin Fuhner

In colour

Camera Operators

Tom Fillingham

B:

Bob Crone

Steadicam Operator

Bob Crone

Editors

Frank Irvine

Bruce Giesbrecht

Production Designer

Richard Wilcox

Art Director

Lawrence Pevic

Set Decorator

Marti Wright

Set Dresser

Ann Power

Storyboard Artist

Chris Bartleman

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Gary Paller

Music Director

Jonathan Sheffer

Music Performed by

Seattle Symphony

Orchestra

Music Editor

Robert Randles

Costume Design

Susan De Laval

Costume Supervisor

Debbie Douglas

Costumer

Tessie Brummitt

Make-up Supervisor

Charles Porlier

Prosthetic Designer

Tibor Farkas

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Supervising

Sound Editor

Howard S.M. Neiman

Sound Editors

Stuart S. Widde

André Bacha

Donlee Jorgensen

David B. Lloyd

Sound Recordists

Larry Sutton

Music:

Joel W. Moss

Sound Re-recordists

Robert Appere

Ron Estes

Gary Rogers

Production

Assistants

Kelly Feser

Office:

Deborah Lampitt

Ross Rubin

Stunt Co-ordinator

Danny Virtue

Animal Trainers

Debbie Coe

Horse:

Danny Virtue

Cast

Faye Grant

Karen York

Michael Woods

Gene York

Michael Lerner

Earl Knight

Madison Mason

Dr Hastings

Ann Hearn

Jo Thueson

Jim Byrnes

Noah

Don S. Davis

Jake Madison

Asia Vieira

Delia

Megan Leitch

Sister Yvonne/Felicity

Joy Coghill

Sister Francesca

David Cameron

Father Hayes

Duncan Fraser

Father Mattson

Susan Chapple

Mother Superior

Dana Still

Revival Preacher

Andrea Mann

Lisa Roselli

Camille Mitchell

Madge Milligan

Brenda Crichlow

Hildy Riggs

William Taylor

Forrest Riggs

Serge Houde

Morris Creighton

Wendy Van Riesen

Lily Creighton

James Sherry

Jerome

Mikal Dughi

Miss Norris

Norman Armour

Blind Medium

Tish Heaven

Customer at Fair

Claire Brown

Hamish Boyd

Psychics

Lesley Ewen

Young Christian

Woman

Shiela Patterson

Older Christian

Woman

Martin Cummins

Drifter

Suzie Payne

Motel Clerk

Ruth McIntosh

Young Novice

Brent Stait

Mica

Tom Heaton

North Carolina Doctor

Karen Yip

Oriental Hooker

Brianne Harrett

Delia, age 3

Rebecca Cynader

Delia, age 2

Shelby Adams

Delia, age 1

Scott Swanson

Graham Resnick

Gerry Bean

Bartender in New

England

Ryder

Dog

8,748 feet

97 minutes

USA 1991

**Directors: Jorge Montesi,
Dominique Othenin-Gérard**

● After several years of childless marriage, wealthy young couple Gene and Karen York adopt a baby girl offered to them by Sister Francesca and Sister Yvonne from a nearby Catholic retreat. At the baptism, the child (named Delia) screams in outrage, and the attending priest dies before the altar. Sister Francesca dies of a stroke, and Sister Yvonne flees the convent for a life of prostitution, before resurfacing as fundamentalist zealot Sister Felicity. When a formerly successful politician is caught in *flagrante delicto* with a prostitute, Gene steps in to run for Congress, beginning a successful political career.

Some years later, Delia (who announces frequently that her father will become President) is pushed from the path of a speeding truck by a large black dog called Ryder, whom Gene immediately adopts. At school, Delia fights with and humiliates a bully; when the boy's father complains, he is decapitated in a freak car crash. Following a horse-riding accident, nine-year-old Delia is sent to hospital where Doctor Hastings notices the early onset of menstruation. A new nanny, Jo, who finds Delia disturbing, takes her to a psychic fair for assessment by her friends. When a 'psychic photograph' reveals a black aura surrounding Delia, she uses her powers to set the fair aflame.

Shortly thereafter, Jo is killed. Karen becomes pregnant, and seeks advice from a priest regarding her dawning fears that Delia will attempt to kill her unborn child. After reading Revelations, Karen hires private detective Earl Knight to find Delia's real parents; Earl traces Sister Felicity to a snake-filled fundamentalist pulpit in North Carolina, where the sight of Delia's photograph causes her to be attacked by the snakes. After mailing his report to Karen, Earl is killed by a construction-site wrecking ball. Karen's baby is born, and a new nanny, Lisa Roselli, arrives to care for Delia.

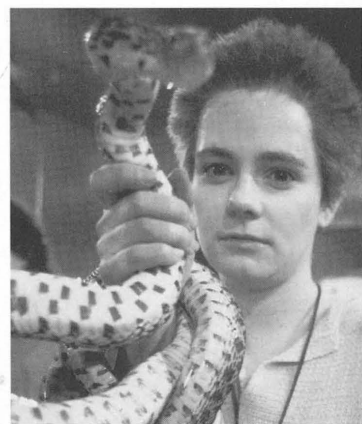
Karen receives Earl's package, and learns of Sister Felicity's obsessive interest in Gene's career. A further visit to her priest, and Gene's announcement that he wishes Delia to be educated in Rome, confirms her fears regarding the girl. Karen confronts Dr Hastings who reveals that Delia is the daughter of Damien Thorn (the Anti-Christ) and that, through the miracle of 'foetus papyraceus', she carried her twin brother's embryo in her womb for nine years; Hastings removed the foetus during Delia's hospital sojourn

and implanted it in Karen's womb, from whence it was born. Hastings is killed while struggling with Karen, who returns home and kills Miss Roselli before moving to kill her new-born son. Instead, she finally kills herself.

Some years after producing *The Final Conflict*, the third in the successful *Omen* series, producer/storywriter Harvey Bernhard developed a treatment for a projected fourth episode entitled *The Abomination*. An ambitious extravaganza dealing with cyclical time and impending Armageddon, *The Abomination* was shelved for financial reasons, although a suitably trashy novelisation appeared and sold in surprising quantities. This second attempt to breathe new life into the money-spinning series was designed for American television, which explains the almost total absence of on-screen blood-letting. More significantly, Bernhard was forced to enlist director Jorge Montesi when Dominique Othenin-Gérard proved unable to perform adequately; the result is, unsurprisingly, a botched amalgam of footage salvaged from a clearly disastrous production.

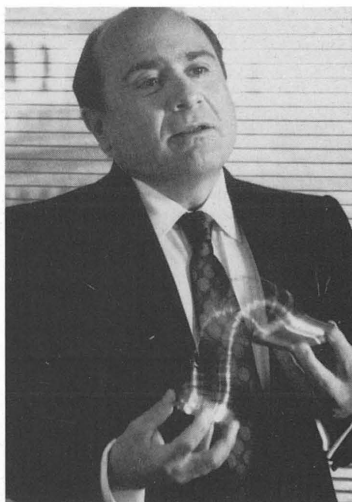
In 1976, *The Omen* capitalised on the paedophobic panic inspired by William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (which screenwriter David Seltzer has admitted he was commissioned to 'rehash'). Now, eighteen years after the release of Friedkin's film and a full twenty-three years since Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby*, scores of inferior 'kiddie-horror' movies have more than exhausted the theme. Indeed, the paucity of new ideas is painfully apparent as this unwelcome sequel plods drearily through a recapitulation of all the set-pieces for which *The Omen* was famed: the decapitation; the low-flying nanny; the attack of the angry dog; the impaling – all trotted out in newly sanitised form, and interspersed with close-ups of starlet Asia Vieira attempting to look fiendish. Not *The Abomination*, then, but certainly abominable.

Mark Kermode



...Megan Leitch

Other People's Money



Greed pays: Danny DeVito

Certificate
15
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Warner Bros
A Yorktown production
Executive Producers
Ellen Krass
Davina Belling
Producers
Norman Jewison
Ric Kidney
Associate Producers
Kelley Baker
Sarah Miller Hayward
Production Associate
Christopher Cook
Production Office Co-ordinators
Sara Spring
Connecticut:
Ann-Cathrin Schmidt
Unit Production Managers
LA:
Helen Pollak
Connecticut:
Joseph E. Foley
NY Unit Manager
Steve Rose
Location Managers
Boyd H. Wilson
Connecticut:
George Bosley
NY:
Charles M. Lum
Casting
Howard Feuer
Extras:
Raquel Osborne
Assistant Directors
Ned Dowd
Marty Ewing
Cherylanne Martin
Julie A. Bloom
Screenplay
Alvin Sargent
Based on the play
by Jerry Sterner
Director of Photography
Haskell Wexler
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operators
Kevin Jewison
Connecticut:
Anastas N. Michos
2nd Unit:
J. Michael McClary
Steadicam Operator
Connecticut:
Anastas N. Michos
Video Image
John C. Wash
Co-ordinator:
David Hofflich
Crew:
Joseph Unsinn
Scott Giegler
Greg Kozikowski
Opticals
Film Effects

Editors
Lou Lombardo
Michael Pacek
Hubert de la Bouillerie
Production Designer
Philip Rosenberg
Art Directors
Robert Guerra
Nathan Haas
Set Decorator
Tom Roysden
Scenic Artist
Giovanni Casalenuovo
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Tom Wood
Music
David Newman
Additional:
Angelo Badalamenti
Music Editor
Tom Villano
Songs
"I'm in the Mood for Love" by Jimmy McHugh, Dorothy Fields; "Solitude" by Eddie De Lange, Irving Mills, Duke Ellington, performed by Stephane Grappelli
Costume Design
Theoni V. Aldredge
Wardrobe
Alice Daniels
Jim O'Daniel
Jennifer Jewison
Make-up Artist
David Forrest
Supervising Sound Editors
Sharon Lackie
Michael O'Farrell
Sound Editors
Alison Fisher
Michael Haight
Sound Recordists
Jeff Wexler
Don Coufal
Gary Holland
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Andy Nelson
Don White
David Appleby
Sound Effects Editors
Thor Henrikson
Alan Geldart
David Cole
Foley Artist
Andy Malcolm
Technical Advisers
Brian Bonamico
Brooke Wilson
Stunt Co-ordinator/ Stunt Double
Jery Hewitt
Stand-in
Danny DeVito:
Fred Scialla

Cast
Danny DeVito
Lawrence Garfield
Gregory Peck
Andrew Jorgenson
Penelope Ann Miller
Kate Sullivan
Piper Laurie
Bea Sullivan
Dean Jones
Bill Coles
R.D. Call
Arthur
Mo Gaffney
Harriet
Bette Henritze
Emma
Tom Aldredge
Ozzie
Leila Kenzle
Marcia
Cullen O. Johnson
Gus
William De Acutis
Pfeiffer
David Wells
Granger
Stephanie White
Angeli
Jeffrey Hayenga
Klein
Ric Kidney
Richardson
Wallace G. Lane Jr
Woody
Steve White
Richard
Brian Evers
Elton
Max Robinson
Ed
Al Cerullo Jr
Helicopter Pilot
Michael Laskin
Concierge
Barney Brown
Kate's Neighbour
Sandy Moore
Samuels
Paul Coyne
Security Guard
Dale Kasman
Kathleen Piche
Receptionists
Peter Brocco
Garfield's Office Valet
Nancy Omi
Japanese Waitress
Mark Pinter
Bart
Mary Hedahl
TV Reporter
Leslie Devlin
FNN Reporter
William "Skip" Church
Glenn K. Pearson
Reporters
Cam McCormack
Camerawoman
Patrick James Grosswendt
Factory Worker
Raul Koblinsky
Proxy Monitor
Woodrow W. Asai
Ken Kensei
Shiro Oishi
Japanese Businessmen
Philip Perlman
Garfield Supporter
Denise Lynne Roberts
Garfield Employee
Janet M. Smith
Kevin Christy Hayes
Richard Arlen
Chapman
Dennis J. Malone
Lawyers
Kevin Lord
Account Executive
Marianne Lewis
Executive Secretary
Tessa Gaynor
Secretary

9,070 feet
101 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Norman Jewison

Lawrence Garfield, a predatory Wall Street operator known as Larry the Liquidator, discovers a new target for his asset-stripping skills: the long-established New England Wire and Cable Company, located in the backwoods of Rhode Island. He starts acquiring shares, and arranges to pay the company a visit. Meeting the Wire and Cable management – Andrew Jorgenson, whose father founded the company, his assistant Bea Sullivan, and the company president, Bill Coles – Larry offers to buy them out. Jorgenson treats his offer with contempt. Bill and Bea, though, are alarmed, and persuade Jorgenson to call in Bea's daughter Kate, a smart young New York lawyer.

Despite Jorgenson's stubbornness, Kate fixes a meeting with Larry. Smitten with lust, Larry agrees to a two-week hiatus, during which neither side will acquire any more shares. Both surreptitiously break the agreement. Stepping up the pressure on Kate, Larry suggests deciding the contest by a night of love-making – whoever comes first, loses. Kate, though increasingly attracted, turns him down.

Bill Coles, anxious about his future, secretly sells Larry the voting rights in his block of shares. Kate, using her hold over Larry – by now desperate enough to propose marriage – gets him to agree to abide by the vote at a shareholders' meeting. Bea Sullivan visits Larry and vainly tries to buy him off with her life savings.

The meeting is held at the factory. In a heartfelt speech, Jorgenson affirms the company's values and denounces Larry. But Larry, pointing out that the factory is operating at a loss and that he can make money for the shareholders, wins the majority of votes. The factory is closed. Moping in his office, Larry receives a call from Kate. A group of Japanese businessmen are willing to fund the retooling of the factory, run by the old workforce. Money will be made. Larry, overjoyed, prepares for a big date with Kate.

Ostensibly, *Other People's Money* is a post-80s comedy about the lethal sexiness of greed, *Wall Street* played for laughs, with DeVito replacing Michael Douglas in the Gordon Gekko role. But its lineage reaches back further, to the Capra comedies of the 30s in which a wicked capitalist confronts a bunch of regular, small-town folks who believe in people and the value of honest labour.

Two incompatible visions of the American Way are set in conflict. "Whatever happened to people serving each other?" asks ▶

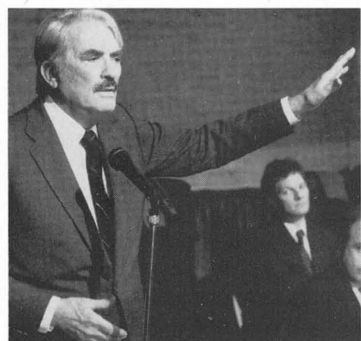
◀ Jorgenson, lamenting that even greed isn't what it was. "The robber barons of old left something tangible – a factory, a railroad. This man leaves nothing but a blizzard of paper". Against this, Larry Garfield asserts the primacy of the bottom line: "Whoever has the most when he dies, wins".

But were this Capra, big business would go down to a rousing defeat, with Larry either loveably converted to folksy values or making a snarling exit, outvoted by the staunch shareholders of Rhode Island. Norman Jewison, a less starry-eyed film-maker in a more cynical era, lets Larry win: "I don't make anything? I'm making you money!" This, though, leaves the film stuck for a happy ending, so some anonymous Japanese are unconvincingly wheeled in as *dei ex machina*.

Altogether, *Other People's Money* never quite gets a firm hold on its comedic conventions, delivering less than the sum of its individually likeable parts. Alvin Sargent's screenplay sets up some good raunchy exchanges between Larry and Kate, and Haskell Wexler makes the most of his locations, with fountains of sparks against the smoky darkness of the foundry. But for the most part, the characterisation remains sketchy: Gregory Peck seems lost; Piper Laurie and Dean Jones have one good scene apiece; and Penelope Ann Miller isn't gutsy enough for a part that calls for Rosalind Russell, or at least Michelle Pfeiffer.

In the end, it's DeVito's film, and he carries it superbly – strutting, snorting and wisecracking like a cross between James Cagney and Groucho Marx, cramming down doughnuts and slipping sardonic asides to camera. His wooing of Kate veers deliriously between sentimentality and rampant lust; an aspiring violinist (with a signed photograph of Isaac Stern on his piano), he at one point serenades her down the phone with a touchingly off-key rendition of "I'm in the Mood for Love". Such shameless overplaying risks reducing *Other People's Money* to a one-man show – but when the show's this enjoyable, it's churlish to complain.

Philip Kemp



Capra returns: Gregory Peck

Out for Justice

Certificate
18
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Warner Bros
Executive Producer
Julius R. Nasso
Producers
Steven Seagal
Arnold Kopelson
Co-producer
Peter MacGregor-Scott
Associate Producer
Jacqueline George
Production Associate
Conrad Bailey
Production Co-ordinators
Office:
Jan Katz
NY:
Gail Geibel
Unit Production Managers
P.M. Scott
NY:
Edwin C. Atkins
Location Managers
Judson Schwartz
NY:
Peter Pastorelli
Location Co-ordinator
John Riggio
Casting
Pamela Basker
Sue Swan
Extra NY:
Joy Todd Inc
Associate:
Grant Wilfley
Assistant Directors
Jerry Ziesmer
Michael McCloud-Thompson
John Gallagher
Screenplay
David Lee Henry
Director of Photography
Ric Waite
Colour
Technicolor
Additional Photography
Robert Wagner
Camera Operators
Rick Neff
NY:
Craig Haagensen
Editors
Robert A. Ferretti
Donald Brochu
Michael Eliot
Additional:
Derek Berlatsky
Production Designer
Gene Rudolf
Art Director
Stephen M. Berger
Set Design
Peter Samish
Set Decorators
Gary Moreno
Ronald R. Reiss
NY:
Elaine O'Donnell
Set Dresser
Tighe Barry
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Dale Martin
Special Effects
Leo Solis
Jim Rollins
Robert Worthington
Joe Quinlivan
NY:
Steven Kirshoff
Music
David Michael Frank
Orchestrations
David Michael Frank
Larry Schwartz
Music Editors
John LaSalandra
Virginia S. Ellsworth

Songs
"Don't Stand in My Way" by Steven Seagal, David Michael Frank, Todd Smallwood, performed by Gregg Allman; "Shake the Firm", "The Bigger They Are (The Harder They Fall)" by Robert Jason, David Michael Frank, performed by Cool J.T.; "Bad Side of Town" by Steven Seagal, David Michael Frank, Todd Smallwood, performed by Sherwood Ball; "When the Night Comes Down" by Todd Smallwood, David Michael Frank, performed by Todd Smallwood; "Puerto Riqueño" by David Michael Frank, Robert Jason, performed by Michael Jimenez; "Dime Corazon" by David Michael Frank, Robert Jason, performed by Ali Olmo; "Temptation" by Todd Smallwood, Tom Whitlock, performed by Teresa Belmont James; "Long Way Home" by Todd Smallwood, David Michael Frank, performed by Louis Price; "One Good Man" by Robert Jason, David Michael Frank, performed by Kymberli Armstrong; "No Sleep Till Brooklyn" by Beastie Boys, Rick Rubin, performed by Beastie Boys
Costume Design
Richard Bruno
Costume Supervisor
Deirdre Williams
Costumer
Laurie M. Riley
Make-up
Supervisor:
Jef Simons
Artist:
Gandhi Bob Arrollo
NY:
Carla White
Title Design
Cimarron/Bacon/O'Brien
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editor
Robert R. Rutledge
Sound Editors
Steve Bushelman
Sam Shaw
David B. Cohn
Craig S. Jaegar
Jerry Stanford
ADR Editor
Richard Marx
Sound Recordists
Joseph Geisinger
Music:
Mick Guzauski
Gary Lux
Orchestra:
Bobby Fernandez
NY:
Thomas Nelson
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Les Fresholtz
Vern Poore
Michael Jiron
Technical Adviser
Jack Cipolla



Not excluded: Steven Seagal

Stunt Co-ordinator

Conrad Palmisano

Stunts

Mike Adams
George Aguilar
Peter Antico
Dana Bertozette
Eddie Braun
Anthony Brubaker
James Burkley
Douglas Crosby
Charles Croughwell
Diana Cuevas
Bing Dang
Jeff Dashnaw
Craig Dunn
E.J. Evans
Frank Ferrara
Carlos Gonzalez
Dick Hancock
Eddie Hice
Kane Hodder
Billy Hank Hooker
Steve Kelso
Barbara Anne Klein
John C. Meier
Manny Perry
Charles Picerni Jr
Steve Picerni
Richard Piemonte
Mario Roberts
J.P. Romano
Stephen J. Santosuso
Rick Seaman
Luis Silva
Manny Siverio
Tony Snegoff
Tierre Turner
Greg Walker
David Webster
Scott Wilder
Jim Wilkey
Brian Williams
Animal Handler
Kim Bonham

Cast

Steven Seagal
Gino Felino
William Forsythe
Richie Madano
Jerry Orbach
Ronny Donziger
Jo Champa
Vicky Felino
Shareen Mitchell
Laurie Lupo
Sal Richards
Frankie
Gina Gershon
Patti Madano
Jay Acovone
Bobby Arms
Nicky Corello
Joey Dogs
Robert Lasardo
Buchi
John Toles-Bey
King
Joe Spataro
Bobby Lupo
Ron Brumelow
Jack Cipolla
Charles Daniel
John Senger
Steve Taylor
Cops
Julius Nasso Jr
Tony Felino
Diane Peterson
Woman in Car
Edward Deacy
Vincent Nasso
Uniform Cops
Jerry Strivelli
Frankie's Bodyguard
Jerome Alvarado
David Basulto
Danny Egliowitz
Frank Faggella Jr
Frankie's Guys
Serafino Tomasetti
Umbrella Man
Gianni Russo
Sammy
Ron Maccone
Don Vittorio
Alan Bialor
Vittorio's Bodyguard
Frank Faggella Snr
Del Golfo Patron
Willie Anne
Gissendanner
Hooker
George Vallejo
Picalino
Carl Ciarfallo
Paulie
Edward Korn
Butcher
Benedetto
Bongiorno
Store Owner
Larry Romano
Sales Clerk
Anthony De Sando
Vinnie Madano
Jerry Ciauri
Bennie the Book
Dominic Chianese
Mr Madano
Vera Lockwood
Mrs Madano
Juliana Margulies
Rica

Christina Solis
Elena
Sonny Hurst
Tattoos
Daniel Inosanto
Sticks
Michael Pecina
Phone Booth Man
Marie Todd
Sammy's Girlfriend
Nick Dimitri
Bartender
Affi
Cameron
Go Go Dancers
Erin Weidner Ashley
Sandy Hernandez
Meadow Spadafino
Hookers
John Leguizamo
Boy in Alley
Jorge L. Gil
Chas the Chair
Craig Pinkard
Chop Shop Foreman
Perry Wayne
Bouncer
Jack Vecchio
Club Bodyguard
Charles Guardino
Waiter
Shannon Whirry
Terry Malloy
Raymond Cruz
Hector
Sandy Allison
Transvestite
Salvatore Bonanno
Vincent Cucci Jr
Philip Rusty
Mignano
Salvatore Sonnie
Mignano
Vittorio's Men
Joe Lala
Vermeer
Julie Strain
Roxanne Ford
Thomas Duffy
O'Kelly
Sonny Zito
Station Wagon
Tough Guy

8,211 feet
91 minutes

USA 1991

Director: John Flynn

Brooklyn, New York. When his best friend and colleague Bobby Lupo is shot dead, cop Gino Felino vows to kill his murderer, small-time hoodlum Richie Madano. A polaroid photograph left on Bobby's body by the killer is removed before Gino arrives. Approached by mafioso Don Vittorio, for whom his boyhood friend Frankie now works, Gino refuses to step aside and let them deal with Richie. When the police raid Don Vittorio's clubs, the tension between Gino and Frankie increases. After arresting Richie's sister Patti at her night-club, Gino puts her and her father in jail, partly for their own safety.

In Bobby's desk, Gino finds polaroids of his murdered friend making love to a woman, whom Patti refuses to identify. While Gino is visiting his estranged wife, the house is attacked by Richie's henchmen; Gino kills them all. A waitress at Patti's club, Terry Malloy, tells Gino about Richie's girlfriend, Roxanne (the woman in the photo), whom Gino later finds murdered in her apartment with a polaroid on her body. Richie and his gang hole up with Rica, an ex-prostitute for whom he used to pimp.

Confronted by Gino, Bobby's widow admits she removed a polaroid of her husband and Roxanne from Bobby's body. She herself had sent the photograph to Richie in a fit of jealousy, thus prompting Bobby's murder. A tip-off leads Gino to Rica's house, where he kills Richie and all his men. As an act of friendship, Gino allows Frankie to take the credit for Richie's death.

Denied a press screening and granted only a nominal two-week West End opening, Steven Seagal's fourth action-man movie is nevertheless his best since his debut in *Nico*. An inevitable tension still exists, however, between Seagal's desire to create a character-driven action picture and the need to showcase his martial-arts skills. The most transparent example of this is a virtually self-contained sequence in which Richie escapes through the back door of a delicatessen, leaving behind six or seven disposable extras to be beaten and meat-cleaved into submission by the pursuing Gino.

That said, some of the slightly self-conscious 'character development' scenes between Gino and, say, Richie's father do offer more than a respite from the explosive violence. Most importantly, they mark Gino out as a man who, unlike the anti-heroes of 70s and 80s cop thrillers, is not excluded from his community by a cynical individualism.

Nigel Floyd

Point Break

Certificate

18

Distributor

20th Century Fox

Production Company

Largo Entertainment

Executive Producer

James Cameron

Producers

Peter Abrams

Robert L. Levy

Production Co-ordinator

Valerie Mickaelian-Kucera

Production Managers

Gary Daigler

Burt Bluestein

Location Managers

Deborah Laub

Craig Pointes

Hawaii:

Stephanie Spangler

2nd Unit Director

Glenn Wilder

Extra Casting

Hawaii:

Dick Kindelon

Assistant Directors

Herb Gains

Chitra F. Mojtabai

Hilbert Hakim

Aerial:

Carla McCloskey

2nd Unit:

James F. Freitag

Glenn Sanford

Screenplay

W. Peter Iliff

Story

Rick King

W. Peter Iliff

Director of Photography

Donald Peterman

Colour

DeLuxe

Prints by

Eastman Colour

2nd Unit Photography

Steve Yaconelli

Underwater Photography

Yuri Farrant

Ron Condon

Bob Condon

Lee Allison

Camera Operators

Keith Peterman

Additional:

Michael St. Hilaire

Jeff Laszlo

Helmet:

Tom Sanders

Ray Cottingham

Aerial:

Frank Holgate

Steadicam Operator

James Muro

Opticals

Pacific Title

Special Effects:

Fantasy II Film Effects

Computer Animation/Displays

Video Image

Editors

Howard Smith

Additional:

Scott Conrad

Burt Lovitt

Production Designer

Peter Jamison

Art Director

Pamela Marcotte

Set Design

Ann Harris

Set Decorator

Linda Spheris

Special Effects Co-ordinator

Terry Frazee

Special Effects

Hawaii:

Donavan Ahuna

Archie Ahuna

Music

Mark Isham

Music Supervisors

Gary Goetzman

Sharon Boyle

MCA Records:

Kathy Nelson

Music Producers

Mark Isham

Stephen Krause

Songs

"Nobody Rides for Free" by Steve Caton,

performed by Ratt;

"I Want You" by

Johnette Napolitano,

performed by

Concrete Blond;

"If 6 Was 9" by and

performed by Jimi

Hendrix; "Rose

Colored Glasses" by

John Clayton-Felt,

Michael Ward,

performed by School

of Fish; "So Long

Cowboy" by and

performed by

Westworld; "My City"

by Spencer Sercombe,

Greg Ellis, performed

by Shark Island;

"Criminal" by Johnny

Lydon, John McGheog,

Alan Dias, performed

by Public Image

Limited; "Smoke on

the Water" by Ian

Gillian, Roger Glover,

Richie Blackmore,

Jon Lord, Ian Paice,

performed by

Loudhouse;

"Hundreds of Tears"

by Sheryl Crow, Bob

Marlette, performed

by Sheryl Crow;

"7 and 7 Is" by Arthur

Lee, performed by

Liquid Jesus; "I Will

Not Fall" by Kevin

Hunter, Brian McLeod,

Anders Rundblom,

Jeff Trott, performed

by Wire Train; "Over

the Edge" by T. Guns,

M. Cripps, P. Lewis,

K. Nickels, S. Riley,

performed by

L.A. Guns

Costume Supervisors

Colby P. Bart

Greg Barbanell

Advisers

Technical:

Michael Cameron

Surfing:

Dennis Jarvis

Football:

Rick Neuheisel

Police:

Call the Cops

Aerial Effects:

Julia Gibson

Production Assistants

Karyn L. Alexander

Lennie Appelquist

Peter J. Etnoyer

Stephen W. Hollocker

Joshua Levinson

John Preiskel

Ricki Spector

Tina Stauffer

Hawaii:

Emmett Dennis

Daryl Carson

Sam Green

Astrid Walti

Stunt Co-ordinator

Glenn Wilder

Stunts

Janet Brady

Clarke Coleman

Erick Coomes

Dusty Courtney

Steve Davidson

Shane Dixon

Eddie Donno

Michael Endoso

Lance Gilbert

Randy Hall

Tabby Hanson

Steve Hart

Freddie Hice

Ace Hatem

Tom Huff

Jeff Imada



Cheerful pillagers

ADR Group

Co-ordinator

Leigh French

Supervising

ADR Editor

Avram Gold

ADR Editors

Curtis Schulkey

Judee Flick

Jessica Gallavan

Eric Rondell

R.A. Rondell

Gilbert Rosales

Steve Santosusso

Gar Stephen

Eric Waugh

George Wilbur

Aerial:

Ted Barba

Ron Bonham

Jan Davis

Jeff Habbestad

Craig Hosking

Jeff Jones

Jack Lombard

Gerald Myers

Steven Rahm

Jim Wallace

Karl Wickman

Stunt Doubles

Patrick Swayze

Scott Wilder

Keanu Reeves

Pat Banta

Surfing Doubles

Todd Coffey

Paul Dunn

Gary Jackson

Mickey Neilsen

Bryan Wisely

Mike Wood

Ralph Younkers

Montage:

Dino Andino

Lori Petty

Jodie Cooper

Patrick Swayze

Matt Archbold

"Big Wave":

Darrick Doerner

Aerial Co-ordinator

Kevin Donnelly

John Meier

Louise K. Middleton

Ted Montue

Frank Orsatti

Noon Orsatti

Jimmy Ortega

Dave Page

Manny Perry

Don Pulford

Chad Randall

Eric Rondell

R.A. Rondell

Gilbert Rosales

Steve Santosusso

Gar Stephen

Eric Waugh

George Wilbur

Aerial:

Ted Barba

Ron Bonham

Jan Davis

Jeff Habbestad

Craig Hosking

Jeff Jones

Jack Lombard

Gerald Myers

Steven Rahm

Jim Wallace

Karl Wickman

Stunt Doubles

releases the other prisoners and topples McLeach into the water. Cody goes over a waterfall and is caught in mid-air by Marahute; McLeach is not so lucky. On Marahute's back, Bernard finally proposes to a willing Miss Bianca. Half-way up the cliff, the forgotten Wilbur hatches Marahute's eggs.

While the original *Rescuers* was one of the most lacklustre animated features ever produced by the Disney studios (under its previous, ill-fated régime), this sequel compels attention from its opening sequence. The young hero's home is reached at the end of a shot which races across the vast Australian Outback, at both a constant speed and a short and steady distance above the wild grass that would defy even George *Mad Max* Miller's mobile camera. This, though, is not live action but animation, with the Disney computers providing exactly that mechanical movement too streamlined to be achieved by any other mechanical means.

The characterisation of Australian nationals tends to be more derivative. The cocksure reptile-taming Jake is clearly modelled on Paul Hogan's Crocodile Dundee, and the rangers looking for Cody are stereotypes imported from old TV shows like *Skippy*, the *Bush Kangaroo*. One should perhaps be grateful that Cody's mother – glimpsed at the start and again later as she calls out her missing son's name – never becomes the cloyingly sentimental figure she so easily might have. In this connection, a scarcely noticeable sub-theme has Marahute's sadness at the loss of her mate echoed by Cody's loss of his father.

The character roots of heroic child and villainous adult, of course, lie less in Australian popular culture than in previous Disney cartoons. The adventurous Cody has considerably more charisma than his bland female counterparts in either the original *Rescuers* or *Oliver & Company*, while McLeach's poacher shows well-honed disdain for both other characters (boys and wildlife) and the environment.

The consistently sharp plotting and narrative coherence (so desperately absent from ex-Disney animator Don Bluth's *Rock-a-Doodle*) culminates in a satisfyingly fast ending which ties together several storylines. But the most telling comparison is with *Peter Pan*, the Disney cartoon which today looks like a cheap version of a Spielberg live-action fantasy. *The Rescuers Downunder* comes on like an Indiana Jones movie which has been reconceived as animation and then proceeded to push back that medium's technical boundaries.

Jeremy Clarke

Shaking the Tree

Certificate

15

Distributor

Hobo

Production Company

Reality Productions

Executive Producers

Anthony J. Tomaska

Richard Wagstaff

Producer

Robert J. Wilson

Production

Co-ordinator

Karyn McCarthy

Location Manager

Thomas F. Gleason

Post-production

Supervisor

Martin L. Bernstein

Casting

Eddie Foy III

Extras:

Jan McLean/4-Extras

Assistant Directors

Kris Krengel

Rebecca Weymouth

Screenplay

Duane Clark

Steven Wilde

Director of Photography

Ronn Schmidt

Colour

Astor Color

Opticals

Optifex

Dick Lin

Editor

Martin L. Bernstein

Production Designer

Sean Mannion

Set Dresser

Joyce Krawcewicz

Storyboard Artist

Kirk Thatcher

Music/Music

Director

David E. Russo

Songs

"Liar", "Vertical City"

by David Russo, Joan

Jones, performed

by Far Cry;

"Radio Luxembourg",

"Kiss the Shadows"

by Eddie Russo,

performed by

Desperate Dreams;

"Pressure" by Michael

McClure, Gary Berg,

performed by Michael

McClure, David

Friendly, David

Carpenter, Gary Berg;

"Catch Me When I

Fall" by Duane Clark,

David Russo,

performed by Vinx

Costume Design

Susan Michel

Kaufman

Set Costumer

Diana Pappajohn

Make-up Artist

Elaine Offers

Title Design

Kinetics

George Eastman

Supervising Sound

Editor

Ric Coken

Sound Editor

Chuck Rapp

Sound Recordists

Hans Roland

Music:

Al Johnson

Ultra stereo

Foley Recordist

Tom Labus

Sound Re-recordists

Ric Coken

Chuck Rapp

Clark Hayes

Sound Effects

Editor

James Moore

Foley Artist

Shawn Snoden

Post-production

Consultant

Stephen Goldsmith

Production

Assistants

Mark Dial

Richard Ledherer

Stunt Co-ordinator

Rick Le Favour

Stunt Double

Gale Hansen:

James Fierro

Cast

Arye Gross

Barry

Gale Hansen

Sully

Doug Savant

Michael

Steven Wilde

Duke

Courtney Cox

Kathleen

Christina Haag

Michelle

Michael Arabian

Nickel

Dennis Cockrum

Mr Bannelli

Nathan Davis

Grandpa Sullivan

Ron Dean

Duke's Father

Brittney Hansen

Bridgette

Terry "Turk" Muller

Ape

Ned Schmidtke

Mr Jack

Maurice Chasse

Cashier at Stubby's

Dick Sasso

New Yorker in Van

John Malloy

Christmas Tree Lot

Owner

Eva Quiroz

Brunette at Bar

Dennis Kelly

Sully's Father

Louie Lancelotti

Cab Driver

Terry Moloney

Barry's Work Buddy

Mick Scriba

Tony Villanova

Barbara Robertson

Nurse

Joey Tomaska

Richie

Kirk Thatcher

Craps Player

9,633 feet

107 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Duane Clark

Christmas, 1989. A group of young men who have known each other since high school prepare to see in the new decade: Barry, a high-flying broker, who is engaged to Michelle; Sully, a drop-out gambler from a rich background; Duke, an ex-boxer now reduced through injury to bartending; Michael, a high-school teacher and struggling novelist who is married to Kathleen, a successful lawyer now expecting their first child.

Over a regular game of poker, Sully declares that he is going to change his life, "shake the tree", and announces his imminent departure for Europe. The following night, at the bar where Duke works, Kathleen walks out after an argument with Michael, and Michelle gets drunk and makes Barry jealous by flirting with Duke. Michael meets Bridgette, a student who has already shown an interest in him, and they leave together. Duke and Sully pick up two women at the bar and take them back to the apartment they share. That night, Michelle confesses to having once slept with one of Barry's friends, and he promptly breaks off their engagement.

Sully, meanwhile, is threatened by the mob over a gambling debt, and Duke, disillusioned with his life of boozing and womanising, tries unsuccessfully to establish a more ▶



Diversions: Arye Gross, Christina Haag

Director: Kathryn Bigelow

Crackshot young FBI agent Johnny Utah, newly assigned to the Los Angeles division, is partnered with Angelo Pappas, a world-weary veteran, to hunt down a gang that has robbed twenty-seven banks in three years. The four-man team always wear masks of former US Presidents Reagan, Nixon, Carter and Johnson. Pappas believes that the "Ex-Presidents" are all surfers, and persuades Johnny to take up surfing in order to trace them. Nearly drowned on his first outing, Johnny is rescued by Tyler, a proudly independent girl who reluctantly agrees to teach him basic surfing skills; through her, he gets to know the maverick surfing community. One of its 'gurus', Bodhi, comes to his rescue when he is attacked by the Razorhead surf gang. Convinced they have found the bank robbers, Johnny and Pappas prepare a dawn raid on the home of Bunker Weiss, the Razorhead leader.

Bunker's group, however, turns out to have been under FBI surveillance for months and could not have committed the robberies. When Johnny is next invited to join Bodhi on a surfing expedition with his three close friends Roach, Nathaniel and Grommet, he suddenly realises that these are the Ex-Presidents and is able to guess their next strike. Johnny and Pappas are waiting when the four masked gunmen emerge from a local bank, but Johnny cannot bring himself to shoot when he has the Ex-President leader in his sights. Now aware of Johnny's identity, Bodhi and his team prepare an escape plan.

Johnny is hustled off by the surfers to enjoy a new thrill - skydiving from their private plane. Bodhi then tells him that Tyler is being held hostage by a fifth member of the team, Rosie, until the Ex-Presidents have safely completed their final robbery of the season. Forced to participate in the raid, Johnny is unable to avert disaster: Grommet is killed, along with a security guard and an off-duty cop. Johnny and Pappas pursue the gang to the airport, where Pappas and Nathaniel are shot dead and Roach is mortally wounded. As the plane flies over the Mexican desert, Bodhi skydives to the rendezvous with Rosie and - without a parachute - Johnny dives after him to ensure Tyler's safety. Bodhi and Rosie drive away, leaving Tyler and Johnny reunited.

Months later, Johnny traces Bodhi to an Australian beach where vast storm-driven waves are lashing the shore. Handcuffed after a fierce struggle, Bodhi pleads to be allowed his once-in-a-lifetime ride on the



Stares: Keanu Reeves, Patrick Swayze

unrepeatable torrent, and Johnny releases him into the ocean. As a wall of water claims the surfer's body, Johnny tosses his FBI badge into the shallows.

Brought to Kathryn Bigelow as a ready-made project, the unhelpfully retitled *Point Break* (it was originally scripted, with aptly grandiloquent resonance, as *Riders on the Storm*) converts Bigelow's own previous night creatures into joyous elementals, unleashed at every sunrise for a renewed orgy of physical bravado. The film is constructed from a series of increasingly outrageous tests to which the director herself has responded with an unflagging zeal, in celebration not only of the spectacular pleasures of surfing and skydiving and chasing bank robbers, but also of the remarkably visceral extremes that violence itself can achieve when orchestrated for the cinema.

Recalling Bigelow's bikers and vampires, it's no surprise that her interest in the beach community of *Point Break* is as a "really bizarre culture that somehow exists simultaneously in the world as we know it", nor that this same sense of self-contained eccentricity extends to cop partnerships, bank employees, and the offices of the FBI. What is a surprise about *Point Break* is that, on the positive side, Bigelow in broad daylight has unfurled a powerfully epic canvas far transcending the timid rustic glimpses of *The Loveless*, and that, more negatively, she has stepped aside from the fascinatingly ambiguous feminism of *Blue Steel* to deliver a dose of macho claptrap such as to leave John Milius and Walter Hill pale with envy.

Breathlessly hurling us, after its initial fusillade under the opening credits, into the heart of FBI headquarters with a single labyrinthine shot that threads through doors, desks, people and a monologue of disdain to leave the imperturbable Johnny Utah with a muttered punchline, *Point Break*

sets an awesome pace from the start. The painterly Bigelow, whose contemplative lacunae for *The Loveless* evoked critical references to Edward Hopper, now seems fully wedded to the urgent hustle of her executive producer, James Cameron. One gasps one's way through *Point Break*, partly in admiration, partly in shock, often because time to breathe appears limited. The ninety-second bank robbery, for example, which dumps us on the floor along with the bank's bewildered customers, is an enthralling blitz of genre expletives, with bizarre echoes of presidential calumny evoked by the sight of Nixon (whose clones performed a comparable feat in John Flynn's *Best Seller*), Reagan, Carter and LBJ on a mission of cheerful pillage.

A similar discouragement to rational response comes with the raid on the Razorhead house, a close-quarters fusillade of vicious confusion culminating in a struggle over the spinning blades of a lawnmower. Like the attenuated chase scene that later races through streets, houses, and assorted glass and canine obstacles, this is heatedly exploitative film-making, urged on by percussive bursts of sound. The chase, while unlikely as a sample of stamina, at least leaves our hero impotently on his back, emptying his gun into the air in recognition that the escaping target is one aspect of himself.

Oddly lightweight in cast, as though the theme (which, taking our hint from *Near Dark*, might be termed that of persistent immortality) belonged to some departed race of Hollywood giants, *Point Break* usefully resists the temptation to act as a vehicle for Patrick Swayze, who plays king beach rat with commendable reticence and not so much a swagger as a quickstep prance. Instead, limelight, laugh lines and love interest are devoted to Keanu Reeves who, understandably perplexed by the strange humours of his opening scenes, and outfaced by the intensity of Lori Petty's skill as his partner, settles for an oafish stare in which the joy of a burgeoning mysticism seems sadly missing.

Greater miscalculation turns the characters of Angelo (Gary Bussey) and his FBI boss (John McGinley) into authoritarian parodies, determined to extract a comical rivalry from their scenes together, but as a result invalidating the film's legitimately serious quest. If there is some vestige of apotheosis remaining - apart, perhaps, from the astonishing sight of Johnny Utah diving out of the sky with nothing but a gun - it is the confirmation that Kathryn Bigelow, aside from her other qualities, is now one of the finest action directors in the business.

Philip Strick

Proof

Certificate

15

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production Company

House & Moorhouse

Films

In association with

the Australian Film

Commission

Producer

Lynda House

Production Co-

ordinator

Jakki Mann

Production Manager

Catherine "Tatts"

Bishop

Unit Manager

Robert Graham

2nd Unit Director

Paul J. Hogan

Casting

Liz Mullinar

Consultants

Greg Apps

Assistant Directors

Tony Mahood

Julie Burton

Screenplay

Jocelyn Moorhouse

Director of

Photography

Martin McGrath

In colour

Camera Operators

2nd Unit:

John Bowering

Noel Jones

Roger van Wensveen

Editor

Ken Sallows

Production Designer

Patrick Reardon

Set Design

Dimitry Huntington

Music

Not Drowning.

Waving:

Russel Bradley

David Bridie

Tim Cole

Rowan McKinnon

Helen Mountfort

John Phillips

James Southall

Wardrobe

Ccerri Barnett

Looks: Hugo Weaving...





...Genevieve Picot

Make-up

Amanda Rowbottom

Title Design

Oliver Streeton

Opticals

Colin Tyler

Sound Editor

Glenn Newnham

Sound Recordists

Lloyd Garrick

Foley:

Steve Burgess

Paul Pirola

Sound Re-recordists

Roger Savage

Steve Burgess

Foley Artist

Gerry Long

Stunt Co-ordinator

Chris Anderson

New Generation

Stunts

Film Extracts

Blood Moon

Cast

Hugo Weaving

Martin

Genevieve Picot

Celia

Russell Crowe

Andy

Heather Mitchell

Mother

Jeffrey Walker

Young Martin

Daniel Pollock

Punk

Frankie J. Holden

Brian

Frank Gallacher

Vet

Saskia Post

Waitress

Belinda Davey

Doctor

Cliff Ellen

Cemetery Caretaker

Tania Uren

Customer

Robert James

O'Neill

Anthony Rawling

Darko Tuscan

Adele Daniele

Hoons

Roy Edmunds

2nd Policeman

Lisa Chambers

Nurse

Suzanne Chapman

Chemist Girl

Angela Campbell

High-heeled Woman

Oswaldo Malone

Waiter

Carole Patullo

Kiosk Girl

Covey

Bill the Dog

8,091 feet

90 minutes

Australia 1991

Director: Jocelyn Moorhouse

● Martin, blind from birth, carries a camera to photograph the world. At home, he is engaged in a war of attrition with his housekeeper Celia, whom he deeply distrusts but who is in love with him. Leaving a restaurant, Martin meets kitchen hand Andy, whose favourite stray cat he had accidentally crushed under a pile of boxes. They take the cat to a vet, and while in the waiting-room, Martin photographs the other customers. He has Andy describe his photos to him, which he labels; he explains that they constitute proof that what he can sense in the world is actually there.

Andy agrees to describe the pictures to him on a regular basis. Martin remembers his childhood: his mother would describe their garden to him, but he suspected her of punishing him for his blindness by lying – in particular about the presence of a man raking leaves, whom he could never hear. On Celia's birthday, Martin rejects her advances. She follows him to the park, where she taunts him by secretly holding back his dog. Andy takes Martin to a drive-in cinema, where Martin accidentally starts a fight; while escaping, they collide with a police car, but Martin saves the situation by claiming to have just lost his sight.

Celia finds Martin's photos of Andy and builds a composite picture of him. In the park, Andy is surprised to find Celia holding back Martin's dog. He attempts to hide, just as Martin photographs the scene. When Martin asks him about the photo he has taken, which contains Andy and Celia, Andy lies about it. Celia takes a photo of Martin on the toilet, which she uses as ransom in exchange for a night of his company. They attend a concert, but at her flat (which is filled with her own photos of Martin), he again rejects her. Martin remembers not believing his mother when she told him she was dying.

Finding themselves alone in Martin's house, Andy and Celia start an affair. Celia hides the park photo under the dog's collar, where it is found and described to Martin by the vet. Returning home to find Celia and Andy together, Martin throws them out. At Celia's flat, Andy is shocked to find her photos of Martin, and walks out. Martin visits his mother's grave and speculates on whether it is really empty. He apologises to Celia for his treatment of her, and then fires her. Martin meets Andy again, and has him describe one last photo – of a man raking leaves.

● *Proof's* theme of blindness fits into a long-standing debate

about vision and cinema's capacity to record it. It most obviously bears comparison with *Blow-Up*, the classic modernist investigation of the status of the photographic image. Like Antonioni's film, *Proof* is about the fact that photographs can only give partial representations of the world, and indeterminate representations at that. But *Proof* also introduces the problem of verbal testimony. A verbal description can never fully sum up what a photograph contains, but it may in any case be totally false, depending on who is doing the describing.

Proof also parallels Paul Cox's phenomenology of blindness in *Cactus*. Cox approached the subject from the angle of a woman who is losing her sight and therefore attempting to use her senses and memory to capture the world while she can. *Proof* is concerned with objective rather than subjective recording but, like Cox's film, explores the relation between the senses. Martin explains to Andy that his photos record the objective presence of things he can otherwise hear, smell or touch. On the soundtrack, apparently insignificant household bumps and clicks are emphasised as phenomena that provide him with evidence to be recorded visually.

These ostensibly abstract debates are posed within a three-handed emotional drama that turns out to be more complex than the theme of everyday infidelity at first suggests. The triangle is built on the base of the petty cruelties and manipulations between Martin and Celia. Like Andy, the viewer is caught in the crossfire of collusive and treacherous looks. When Celia gives Andy what is apparently a lascivious come-on, it is directed not only at him, but at the viewer's awareness that Martin cannot see it.

If the viewer's place forms one gap in the triangle, another is formed by the 'mystery' around which the story revolves. Martin's Oedipal drama (what could be more Oedipal than the story of a blind man and his mother?) is presented as the missing piece that 'explains' his relationship to the world, and as such, might seem unsatisfactorily pat. But it too is highly questionable. If we cannot trust photos, how can we trust Martin's remembered past with an idealised mother, in which he himself appears as an idealised child? And within that story is a further gap – the absence of Martin's father. Given the film's ending, it is tempting to identify him symbolically with the man raking leaves, but that possibility remains tantalisingly open.

There is also more to Martin's blindness than meets the eye (the film makes ample, if sometimes

obvious, verbal play of this kind). His blindness is metaphorical as much as literal – not simply an inability, but a *refusal* to see, to acknowledge the sort of evidence that is usually taken to be reliable. Although he can touch his mother's coffin, he will not accept it as proof of her death. He sometimes uses blindness as a weapon (for example, to get served in a restaurant), but otherwise seems to conceive of it as a sighted person might, as a lack to be filled, and constantly seeks a surrogate vision. His body seems never to have 'settled into' blindness – instead he stumbles around at odds with the world, crashing into it.

This situation stems from a prohibition imposed by his mother, who tells him he cannot touch people whenever he likes ("Fingers aren't the same as eyes"). Hence, his fear of touch (his shying away from Celia) and concomitant overvaluing of sight. Paradoxically, this inverts the meaning of his mother's proscription – Martin imagines eyes as if they were the same as fingers, and treats seeing as possession.

But Martin's method depends on the incorruptibility of the person describing the picture (just as the content of any picture can be said to depend on the competence of its viewer). Andy tells Martin, "You tell the truth, Martin, your whole life's the truth. Have pity on the rest of us". But Martin's life is anything but the truth. The objective world he claims to record is one that he actively constructs. It is his own composite fiction, and there is a parallel in the way that Celia subverts his photos by building them into her own composite of Andy – not an Andy she objectively sees, but one she creates to use against Martin.

When Martin is finally faced with the truth – in a conventional scene of adultery discovered – a catharsis seems to have been achieved, but it is a false one. He apologises to Celia, but dismisses her. He seems reconciled with Andy, long enough to have him describe the photo that will presumably answer his life's mystery. It may be encouraging to learn that this mother was not lying, that the man with the rake was really there. But this answer casts doubt on the evidence of Martin's senses – after all, his suspicion was based on the fact that he could never hear the man. The film's last image evokes this deceptive resolution. The child Martin faces a window – as the rain stops, his hand in close-up reaches for the brightening sky. But it is a sky he will neither touch (he is separated from it by glass), nor see. The moment at which his world seems to become light is, after all, the one at which the story of his life's (self-)imprisonment begins.

Jonathan Romney

The Rescuers Downunder

Certificate
U
Distributor
Warner Bros
Production Company
Walt Disney
In association with
Silver Screen
Partners IV
Producer
Thomas Schumacher
Associate Producer
Kathleen Gavin
Production Managers
Sarah McArthur
Florida:
Tim O'Donnell
Casting
Mark V. Buck
Susan Edelman
Screenplay
Jim Cox
Karey Kirkpatrick
Byron Simpson
Joe Ranft
Based on characters
created by Margery
Sharp
Digitising Camera Supervisor
Robyn Roberts
Colour
Technicolor
Digitising Camera Operators
Jo Ann Breuer
Bob Cohen
Cindy Garcia
Karen China
Lynette Cullen
Kent Gordon
Sherri Vandoli
Animation Camera Supervisor
John Cunningham
Animation Camera Operators
John Aardal
Chris Beck
Mary E. Lescher
Gary W. Smith
Chuck Warren
Video
David Weiss
Al Vasquez
Pat Ferraioli
Effects Graphics
Bernie Gagliano
Supervising Animators
Glen Keane
Russ Edmonds
Ruben A. Aquino
Ed Gombert
Kathy Zielinski
Mark Henn
David Cutler
Nik Ranieri
Anthony De Rosa
Duncan Marjoribank
Character Animators
James Baxter
David Burgess
Mike Cedeno
Dave Pruiksma
Ken Duncan
Jorgen Klubien
David P. Stephan
Brigitte Hartley
Tom Roth
Ron Husband
Alexander
S. Kupersmidt
Rick Farniloe
Rejean Bourdages
Joe Halder
Gee Fwee Border
Chris Wahl
Doug Krohn
Leon Joosen
Will Finn
Chris Bailey
Jacques Muller
Roger Chiasson
Ellen Woodbury
Barry Temple
Larry White
Phil Young
Effects Supervisor
Randy Fullmer

Effects Animators
Ted Kierscey
Kelvin Yasuda
Eusebio Torres
Barry Cook
Dave Bossert
Mark Myer
Christine Harding
Glenn Chaika
Mark Dindal
Computer Animation
Tina Price
Andrew Schmidt
Clean-up Supervisor
Rick Hoppe
Animation Checking Supervisor
Janet Bruce
Animation Checking
Susan Burke
Mavis Shafer
Gary Shafer
Karen Paat
Madlyn O'Neill
Barbara Wiles
Layout Supervisor
Dan Hansen
Key Layouts
Rasoul Azadani
Bill Perkins
Layout Artists
Karen Keller
Robert Walker
Bluesketch
Roxy Stevens
Madlyn O'Neill
Airbrush
John Emerson
Background Supervisor
Lisa Keene
Background Artists
Jim Coleman
Douglas Ball
Cristy Maltese
Tom Woodington
Robert E. Stanton
Donald Towns
Phil Phillipson
Dean Gordon
Diana Wakeman
Michael Humphries
Tia Kratter
Ink and Paint Manager
Gretchen Maschmeyer
Albrecht
Paint Supervisor
Hortensia Casagran
Paint Final Check
Hortensia Casagran
Saskia Raevouri
Paint Mark-up
Tania Mitman Burton
Tanya Moreau-Smith
Irma Velez
Painting
Joyce Alexander
Phyllis Bird
Russell Blandino
Bonnie Blough
Sherrie Cuzzort
Phyllis Fields
Paulino Garcia
Carolyn Guske
Anne Hazard
Karen Hepburn
David Karp
Monica Marroquin
Harlene Mears
Beth Ann McCoy
Teri McDonald
Charlene D. Miller
Deborah Jane
Mooneyham
Karen Nugent
Leyla Pelaez
Nellie Rodriguez
Carmen Sanderson
Bruce Phillipson
Fumiko R. Sommer
Roxanne M. Taylor
Heidi W. Shellhorn
Susan Wileman
Britt Vandernagel
Compositing
James "JR" Russell
David Rowe
Supervising Character Leads
Bill Berg
Emily Giuliano
Brian Clift
Marty Korth
Renee Holt
Vera Lanpher

Character Leads
Debra Armstrong
Margie Daniels
Kaaren Lundeen
Stephen Zupkas
Jesus Cortes
Nancy Knip
Dan Tanaka
Alex Topete
Character Keys
Bette Isis Baker
Philo Barnhart
Lou Dellarosa
Tom Ferriter
Daniel A. Gracey
Margaret Nichols
Gilda Palinginis
Dave Suding
Dorothea Baker
Wes Chun
Marcia Dougherty
Trey Finney
Ray Harris
Lori M. Noda
Natasha Selfridge
Jane Tucker
Tom Bancroft
Kent Culotta
Sam Ewing
Gail Frank
Tracy M. Lee
Jennifer Oliver
Alan Simpson
Lureline Weatherly
Character Design/Visual Development
Christopher Sanders
Bruce Zick
Glen Keane
Chris Buck
Gay Lawrence-Ventura
Kevin Lima
Kelly Asbury
Kevin Donoghue
Duncan Marjoribanks
Valerio Lawrence-Ventura
Gil Hung
Colour Models Supervisor
Karen Comella
Scene Planning Supervisor
Ann Tucker
Scene Planning
Geoff Schroeder
Rick Sullivan
Breakdowns/Inbetweens
Beverly Adams
Hee Rhan Bae
Noreen Beasley
Gordon Bellamy
Philip S. Boyd
Inna Chon
Robert D. Corley
Tony Craig
Vincent DeFrances
Wendie Fischer
James Fujii
Susan Gal
Richard H. Green
Peter Gullerud
Edward Gutierrez
Michael Hazy
Grant Hiestand
Ken Hettig
Todd Hoff
Allison Hollen
Mark Kennedy
Christine Lawrence
Laura Nichols
Matt Novak
Ed Olson
Gary Payne
Karen Rosenfield
Martin Schwartz
Donald Selders
Kevin Smith
Bryan M. Sommer
Michael Swofford
David Teague
Bill Thinnies
Jane Vytiskova
Elizabeth Watasin
Daniel Wawrzaszek
Wendy Werner
Effects Breakdown/Inbetweens
Cynthia Neil-Knizek
Masa Oshiro
Tony West
Peter Demund
Kennard Betts

Digital Production System Development
Randy Cartwright
Lem Davis
Don Gworek
Mark Kimball
Michael Purvis
David Coons
Scott Greenidge
Jim Houston
Dylan Kohler
Marty Prager
David F. Wolf
Technical Support
Michael Bolds
Pradeep Hiremath
Grace Shirado
Randy Fukuda
Carlos Quinonez
Michael Sullivan
Pixar
Thomas Hahn
Michael A. Shantzis
Peter Nye
Rick Ace
Digitising Mark-up
Gina Wootten
Line Repair
Angelika Katz
Editors
Michael Kelly
Additional:
Mark Hester
Art Director
Maurice Hunt
Storyboard Artists
Ed Gombert
Christopher Sanders
Roger Allers
Glen Keane
Vance Gerry
Gary Trousdale
Brenda Chapman
Will Finn
Robert Lence
Kirk Wise
Kelly Asbury
Character Sculptures
Ruben Procopio
Music/Music Director
Bruce Broughton
Didgeridoo
Performed by
Adam Rudolph
Orchestrations
Don Nemitz
Mark McKenzie
Supervising Music Editor
Kathleen Bennett
Songs
"Black Slacks" by
Joe Bennett, Jimmy
Denton, performed
by Joe Bennett and
The Sparkletones;
"Waltzing Matilda"
by A.B. Paterson,
Marie Cowan
Title Design
Dan Perri
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editors
Louis L. Edemann
Paul Timothy Carsten
Sound Editors
Fred Judkins
Doug Jackson
Leonard Geschke
Nils Jensen
Robert O'Brien
Suhail Kafity
ADR Editor
Larry Singer
Sound Recordists
Mary Jo Lang
Music:
Robert Fernandez
Foley Recordist
James Ashwill
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Terry Porter
Mel Metcalfe
David J. Hudson
Sound Effects
Mel Neiman
Alan Howarth

Foley
Taj Soundworks
Foley Artists
Kevin Bartnof
Hilda Hodges
Technical Director
Edward Kummer
Production Assistants
Charles Desrochers
Kevin Wade
Eric Stern
Eric Lee
Patricia Hicks
Bruce Grant Williams
Dale A. Smith
Jill A. Prestigiacomo
Florida:
Kevin L. Briggs
Beth Ann Collins
Matthew Garbera
Janet McLaurin
Paul Steele
Voices
Bob Newhart
Bernard
Eva Gabor
Miss Bianca
John Candy
Wilbur
Tristan Rogers
Jake
Adam Ryan
Cody
George C. Scott
Percival McLeach
Wayne Robson
Frank
Douglas Seale
Krebbs
Frank Welker
Joanna/Additional
Special Vocal Effects
Bernard Fox
Chairmouse/Doctor
Peter Firth
Red
Billy Barty
Baitmouse
Ed Gilbert
François
Carla Meyer
Faloo/Mother
Russi Taylor
Nurse Mother
Charlie Adler
Vanna Bonta
Mari Mak
Patrick Pinney
Jack Angel
Peter Greenwood
Mickie McGowan
Phil Proctor
Additional Voices

6,934 feet
77 minutes

USA 1990

Directors: Hendel Butoy, Mike Gabriel

The Australian Outback. Eight-year-old Cody finds Marahute the eagle caught in a poacher's snare and cuts her bonds. The panicking Marahute knocks him over the cliff edge, but catches and carries him to her egg-laden nest and gives him a feather. Rescuing a mouse from another trap, Cody falls into the pit of poacher Percival McLeach and his sidekick, Joanna the goanna lizard. McLeach notices the feather. The mouse signals the international mouse Rescue Aid Society for help, which cuts short agent Bernard's marriage proposal to colleague Miss Bianca over dinner in New York. Cody's plight overcomes the doubts of Wilbur the albatross about flying in snowstorm conditions.

McLeach and Joanna meanwhile drive Cody to their abandoned mineshaft hideaway. Wilbur lands on Jake the kangaroo mouse's inadequate airstrip, which leaves him in need of medical attention. To transport the mice, Jake commandeers a giant snake, interrupting Bernard's second proposal to Miss Bianca. McLeach locks Cody in frill-necked lizard Frank's cage, along with other game, for refusing to reveal the location of Marahute's nest. The radio reports that the search for Cody has been abandoned. The poacher then decides to release the boy, telling him that the eagle's eggs won't survive without their mother, and setting out to follow him.

Reaching Marahute's nest, Cody dislodges a telltale feather into the ravine. The mice - who have secretly hitched a ride on McLeach's vehicle - arrive to warn Cody of the danger. McLeach fires a projectile which catches Marahute in a net. Unable to free the eagle before being winched to the cliff top, Cody and Jake are imprisoned along with her. McLeach lowers Joanna to the nest, but she finds the eggs impossibly tough and knocks them into the ravine. Bernard then rolls the real eggs out of the undergrowth and back into the nest. When Wilbur arrives, Bernard asks him to sit on the eggs.

Bernard follows McLeach to a crocodile-infested river, into which the poacher lowers Cody. Bernard



Children of Spielberg

◀ loving relationship with his father. At the end of a night on the town, Michael accuses Duke of not having the determination to pull himself out of a dead-end job, and Barry demands to know which of his friends slept with Michelle. There is a fight when he learns it was Michael, and refuses to accept the latter's explanation that it was a mistake made a long time ago. On New Year's Eve, Duke and Barry collect Sully for a night of revelry, but Sully, unable to face his irresponsible behaviour and convinced he is about to be killed by the mob, is in a near-suicidal state.

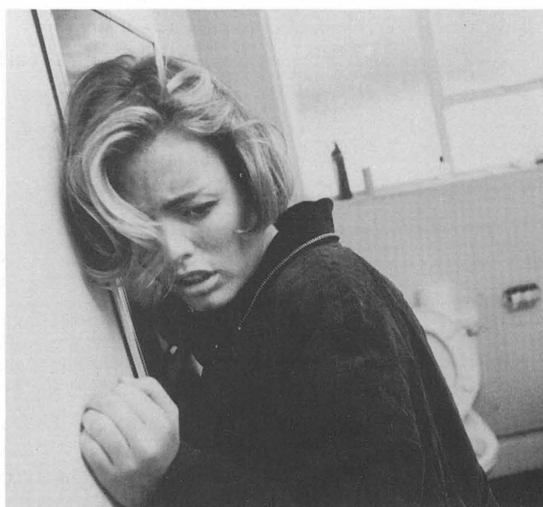
Helped out of his despair by Duke and Barry, he tries to put matters right with the mob and finds he has been bailed out of trouble by his grandfather. Duke quits the bar and goes for a better job as a salesman, and Michael, refusing a sexual relationship with Bridgette, finally commits himself to his marriage and the family. On the eve of the New Year, Barry, now reconciled with Michael, calls Michelle to apologise, and Kathleen gives birth to a boy in the early hours of 1990.

● Within the first few minutes, *Shaking the Tree* establishes its pretensions as a serious movie with some lumpy literary references to Joyce, Hemingway, Eliot and Steinbeck. Having served their real purpose of letting us know how cultured the film-makers are, these mercifully cease, and what follows is a cliché-ridden tale of male friendship which fails either to motivate the characters or to establish the lines of friendship that supposedly exist between them. *Shaking the Tree* combines the 'buddy' movie with the recent Hollywood penchant for ensemble acting but fails to convince in either department, although the young actors and actresses, especially Courteney Cox, do their best with a risible script and storyline.

If the portrayal of the men is shallow, it's inevitably the women who come off worst, given a film which only gestures at their existence within the male group. Kathleen's main role seems to be to behave in such an uptight, priggish fashion that Michael is driven to seek solace with one of his students, while Michelle is portrayed as a giggling airhead who cares only about the colour of her wedding dress. In one particularly embarrassing scene, the four drunken friends are stumped by their own question – "What is it that women want?" This hangs in the air, dangerously unanswered, until our attention is diverted by a manly scuffle and punch-up between Barry and Michael about who has slept with whom.

Jill McGreal

Twenty One



Packaged: Patsy Kensit

Certificate

15

Distributor

Entertainment

Production Company

Anglo International

Films

Executive Producers

Mike Curb

Lester Korn

Carole Curb

Producers

Morgan Mason

John Hardy

Production

Co-ordinators

Elizabeth Burn

Venice:

Pat Liani

Production Manager

Waldo Roeg

Location Managers

Mark Griffiths

NY:

Deborah Matthews

Casting

Suzanne Crowley

Gilly Poole

Assistant Directors

Waldo Roeg

Robert Fabbri

David Lawley-Wakelin

Screenplay

Zoe Heller

Don Boyd

Story

Don Boyd

Director of

Photography

Keith Goddard

In colour

Camera Operators

Colin Corby

Tom Buckholtz

Steadicam Operator

Denis Kingston

Editor

David Spiers

Production Designer

Roger Murray-Leach

Art Director

Terrie Wixon

Music

Michael Berkeley

Electronic:

Phil Sawyer

Electronic Music

Performed by

Phil Sawyer

Costume Design

Susannah Buxton

Make-up

Penny Smith

Titles

Plume Partners

Sound Editor

Alan Killick

Foley Editor

Brian Intern

Sound Recordists

John Midgley

Larry Peter

Sound Re-recordists

Robin O'Donoghue

Dominic Lester

Footsteps Artists

Beryl Mortimer

Dominic Lester

Production

Assistants

Dominique Walker

Steve Mora

Stunt Co-ordinator

Gareth Milne

Stand-in

Patsy Kensit:

Elizabeth Murray

Cast

Patsy Kensit

Katie

Jack Shepherd

Kenneth

Patrick Ryecart

Jack

Maynard Eziashi

Baldie

Rufus Sewell

Bobby

Sophie Thompson

Francesca

Susan Wooldridge

Janet

Julia Goodman

Linda

Julian Firth

Michael

Guy Oliver-Watts

Marcus

Robert Bathurst

Mr Metcalfe

Ben Murphy

Gerald Morris

Shelley Borkum

Agency Woman

Veronica Clifford

Bobby's Aunt

Donald Tandy

Bobby's Father

Joan Campion

Bobby's Mother

Maggie Norris

Pub Landlady

Tip Tipping

Paul Heasman

Mark Newman

Pub Boys

Tyger Kahn

Fashion Editor

Lolly Susi

Assistant Editor

Anthony Gardner

Riverside Waiter

Rebecca Cardinale

Jack's Wife

Kim Kindersley

Best Man

Paul Arlington

Bride's Father

Anne Romyn

Melissa

9,110 feet

101 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Don Boyd

● Twenty-one-year-old Katie has fled England after her parents' divorce and a series of traumatic events, and now works in a publisher's office in New York. From her new home, she recounts her past sexual adventures...

A friend, Jack, attempts unsuccessfully to seduce the teenage Katie at his own wedding; a month later, she uses him for her own pleasure. Katie's longest relationship is with Bobby, a drug-addicted telephone salesman, with whom life is turbulent. Kate continues to resort to Jack for physical relief, confessing all to her male confidant, Baldie (a black synthesizer player who fears the attentions of the immigration authorities), and her female friend Francesca, who endures an abortion amongst other tribulations.

When Katie's mother threatens to leave her father, he seeks solace with his daughter. After purchasing drugs in a darkened alley, Bobby takes Katie to a pub, where she is harassed by three young men while he injects himself in the toilet. A brawl ensues and Bobby is badly beaten. Katie and Bobby retire to the home of a wealthy friend, Michael, but another argument ensues when Michael demands drugs.

In Venice, Katie enjoys an exciting sexual bout with Jack. One morning, back in England, she awakens to find Bobby dead beside her from drug abuse. She travels to Scotland with Baldie for Bobby's wake, only to be rejected by his parents. Back in London, Katie marries Baldie, thus granting him legal immigrant status, then emigrates to New York.

● Director Don Boyd and Zoe Heller's clumsy script (with its recurrent refrain of "I'm not a nymphomaniac, but...") attempts heavy-handedly to establish Patsy Kensit's heroine as a thoroughly modern young woman, in control of her own desires and able to achieve satisfaction through her own ingenuity. "For me, sex and love come in different packages", announces Katie blandly, upon which thesis the subsequent action is predicated. Yet in Boyd's strangely sanitised vision, neither genuine emotion nor passionate excitement are in evidence, even in separate packages. These failings are encapsulated in a prolonged scene in which Katie and Jack make love in a Venetian hotel room; filmed in languorous slow motion with a wailing orchestral soundtrack, the two actors huff and puff their way through a bizarre pantomime of erotic activity. Sex-talk doesn't come much safer than this.

Mark Kermode

Certificate
15
Distributor
Blue Dolphin
Production Company
Paramount
Producers
Robert Evans
Harold Schneider
Associate Producer
Alan Finkelstein
Production Associates
Roy M. Rosenbluth
A. Blaine Currier
Production Office
Co-ordinator
Jane Prossit
Unit Production Manager
Max A. Stein
Location Manager
Joe O'Hara
Costing
Terry Liebling
Extras:
The Casting Company
Rick Montgomery
Dan Parada
Assistant Directors
Michael Daves
Linda Wilde
Rockstoad
Michael Kennedy
Gail Seely
Todd Grodnick
Screenplay
Robert Towne
Director of Photography
Vilmos Zsigmond
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operators
Ray De la Motte
Earl Clark
Steadicam Operators
Chris Squires
Andrew Jeff Mart
Video Playback
Pete Martinez
Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation
Editor
Anne Goursaud
Production Designers
Jeremy Raiton
Richard Sawyer
Art Director
Richard Schreiber
Set Decorator
Jerry Wunderlich
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Joe Lombardi
Music
Van Dyke Parks
Music Director/Orchestrations
Lennie Niehaus
Supervising Music Editor
Jeff Carson
Songs
"Don't Smoke in Bed" by Willard Robinson, performed by Peggy Lee; "(Don't Telephone, Don't Telegraph) Tell a Woman" by Tex Williams, Al Stewart, performed by Tex Williams; "Till Then" by Eddie Seale, Sol Maacus, Guy Wood; "Sleepy Lagoon" by Jack Lawrence, Eric Coates; "To Each His Own" by Jay Livingston, Ray Evans; "Tumbling Tumbleweeds" by Bob Nolan, performed by Sons of the Pioneers; "You Can't Be True Dear" by Gerhard Ebele, Hal Cotton, Hans Otten, Ken Griffin; "The Whistler" by Wilbur Hatch; "Twilight Time" by Buck Ram, Morty Nevins, Al Nevins; "My Ideal"

by Newell Chase, Richard Whiting, Leo Robin; "Sophisticated Lady" by Duke Ellington, Irving Mills, Mitchell Parrish; "Everything I Have Is Yours" by Burton Lane, Harold Adamson, performed by Billy Eckstein; "When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano" by Leon Rene, performed by The Ink Spots; "Haunted Heart" by Arthur Schwartz, Howard Dietz, performed by Jo Stafford; "Ajax Jungle" by Joe Aines
Costume Design
Wayne A. Finkelstein
Costume Supervisor
Eric H. Sandberg
Costumers
Iris Caill
Marilyn Matthews
Jennifer Butler-Fox
Antonio Martinez
Make-up Artists
Brad Wilder
Ray Sebastian
Title Design
Anthony Goldschmidt
Titles
Pacific Title
Supervising Sound Editor
Julia Evershade
Sound Editors
Michael J. Benavente
James Matheny
James Hoeaen
David Williams
Bob Newlan
ADR Editor
Thomas Whiting
Foley Editor
Mark Pappas
Sound Recordists
Arthur Rochester
Music:
Douglas Botnick
Foley Recordist
Greg Cuada
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Douglas Greenfield
Sound Re-recordists
Robert J. Utt
Elliot Tyson
Greg P. Russell
Sound Effects
John Paul Fasal
Foley Artists
Ken Dufva
David Lee Fein
Technical Consultant
Robert B. Krueger
Golf Adviser
Scott Flynn
Production Assistants
Ken Kenny
Bruce Weiss
Office:
Pat Knack Jackson
Stunt Co-ordinator
Ronnie R. Rondell

Cast
Jack Nicholson
Jake Gittes
Harvey Keitel
Jake Berman
Meg Tilly
Kitty Berman
Madeleine Stowe
Lillian Bodine
Eli Wallach
Cotton Weinberger
Ruben Blades
Mickey Nice
Frederic Forrest
Chuck Newty
David Keith
Loach Jnr
Richard Farnsworth
Earl Rawley
Tracey Walter
Tyrone Otley
Perry Lopez
Captain Lou Escobar
Joe Mantell
Lawrence Walsh
Jeff Morris
Ralph Tilton
James Hong
Kahn
Tom Waits
Plainclothes Policeman
Rebecca Broussard
Gladys
John Herman
Shaner
Saul
Allan Warnick
Notary Public
Van Dyke Parks
Francis Hannah
Paul A. DiCocco Jnr
Liberty Levine
John Hackett
Mark Bodine
Rosie Vela
Linda
Susan Forristal
Delores
Will Tynan
Judge Dettmer
William Duffy
Desk Sergeant
Sue Carlton
Mattie Rowley
Don McGovern
Bartender
Wana Anders
Florist
Dean Hill
Cop
Pia Gronning
Dr Elsa Branchauer
John Herman
Shanea
Soul
Michael Shanea
Benny
Lee Weaver
Malck Abdul-Mansour
Caddies
Ken Learvi
Prowler
Annie Marshall
Client with Dog
Ian Thorpe
Errol Flynn Lookalike
Colette Northop
Cigarette Hat-check Girl
Patricia Durham
Clarissa
Aandi Ingerman
Lady Asleep
Bob George
Bar Maitre d'
Suzanne Mitchell
Redhead
Alan Chaffin
Bar Manager
Wyn Costello
Black-eye Woman
Lisa Regina
Caoisette
Actress at Max Factor
Jessica Z. Diamond
Receptionist
Bernard Igitinea
Singer at Green Parrot
Earl Palmaea
Simeon Pillich
Herman Riley
Band at Green Parrot

12,384 feet
138 minutes

USA 1990

Director: Jack Nicholson

1948. Private detective Jake Gittes, a specialist in divorce work, is hired by real-estate developer Jake Berman, who suspects that his wife Kitty is being unfaithful. Gittes and his associate Walsh set up a tape recorder next to the hotel-room love nest, but are horrified when Berman, bursting in as planned, shoots the man dead. The latter turns out to be Berman's partner Bodine, and Gittes is subsequently accused by Bodine's widow Lillian of having helped the Bermans in their conspiracy to murder her husband (Bodine's share of a housing development in the San Fernando Valley will now pass to Berman).

Various people are soon showing a keen interest in the tape Gittes had made of the lovers' conversation in the hotel room: Berman's lawyer Cotton Weinberger; police captain Escobar and his associate Loach, who always provokes Gittes' hostility because his father was responsible for shooting Evelyn Mulwray in Chinatown eleven years previously; and mobster Mickey Nice. Lawyer Chuck Newty, associated with both the Bodines and oil magnate Earl Rawley, suggests that Gittes help prove Berman guilty of murder, so Lillian will get her husband's share of the San Fernando lot and not be tempted to sue Gittes.

Listening to the tape, Gittes hears Bodine refer to Evelyn Mulwray's daughter Katherine, who disappeared after her mother's death and whom Gittes has always felt it was his obligation to protect. He visits the San Fernando Sub-Division, land that belonged to Evelyn and her father Noah Cross, and that now should be Katherine's. He meets the enigmatic Kitty Berman, and later he is seduced by the unstable Lillian, who is also after the tape. Walsh comes up with land deeds proving that Katherine Mulwray gave the land, via Mickey Nice, to Berman, while retaining the mineral rights.

Tailing a man who is tailing Berman, Gittes is led to Earl Rawley. Though the latter is ostensibly drilling towards the sea for oil, Gittes is told by Tyrone Otley, excitable expert on the local geology, that he is drilling towards the Sub-Division, which is dangerous because of gas deposits. Gittes eventually works out how Berman smuggled a gun into the hotel room: it was strapped beneath a chair brought by Mickey Nice's men disguised as movers. Over a golf game, Berman attempts to force Gittes to surrender the tape, in the process inadvertently revealing that he is a very sick man. After being confronted with the truth of Bodine's death, Kitty Berman asks Gittes to give the police the

incriminating tape, and he deduces that she is Katherine Mulwray.

Gittes realises that Berman had done everything to protect Katherine, and that Bodine, having discovered her identity, was going to blackmail Berman into handing over the mineral rights to the land for himself and Rawley. Gittes doctors the tape-recording, and the charges of premeditated murder against Berman are dismissed. Later, at the Sub-Division, Gittes consoles Berman. The latter confesses how, because of his terminal illness, and his contaminating treatment, he had kept Katherine at a distance – and pushed her into Bodine's arms. As another of the area's regular earthquakes releases the gas beneath the Sub-Division, Gittes leaves Berman alone to light a last cigarette...

The first surprise, and disappointment, of *The Two Jakes* is that it looks less like a sequel to *Chinatown* than a companion-piece to the film that Robert Towne actually finished as a writer-director, *Tequila Sunrise*. This was made after the first attempt at *The Two Jakes* had collapsed: the version that Towne was to direct from his own script in 1985, with Jack Nicholson reprising gumshoe Jake Gittes, and producer Robert Evans reviving a long-dead career as an actor by appearing as the second Jake. The three men even formed one of those independent Hollywood companies which every so often try to beat Hollywood at its own game, and struck an unprecedentedly profitable deal with Paramount to back them. Then came the fallings-out – Evans' inability to perform, Towne's problems directing, and probably Paramount's doubts over that deal – and production was stopped on *The Two Jakes* Number One.

Before the project was revived in 1989, with Nicholson taking over as director, Towne made *Tequila Sunrise* – and to all intents and purposes made *The Two Jakes*. The subject of both is the love that is forever speaking of itself: the friendship, or soulmate-ship, of the two male leads, and how their path to reconciliation is blocked by their roles on opposite sides of the law, by a largely symbolic woman-in-the-middle, and by some figments from the past. Frustration invades the style of the films, and in fact is celebrated by them: a mooning, sunset-struck contemplation of the cosmic forces that have conspired to keep these made-for-each-other characters apart.

It's alarming to consider how the sharp, economical – and ironic – observation of male rites of passage in *The Last Detail* has sunk to this inane doodling, having passed of course through the watershed of *Chinatown*. This may have been the ►

◀ last time that Towne's personal ambitiousness – *Tequila Sunrise*, we are told, was autobiographical, and so, at least partly, must *The Two Jakes* be – was disciplined at all by genre, and structured by matters social, political or biblical. The success of *Chinatown* freed Towne, and – not to put too biblical a point on it – may also have damned him.

In fact, a more interesting test and proof of friendship than anything in the film is the way Nicholson has allowed Towne to emerge as the real auteur. His once-a-decade essays in direction (*Drive, He Said; Goin' South*) have revealed Nicholson as an amiable man of the times (drop-out angst, post-Western comedy), but also as a director with a shrewd sense of performance and an antic, undercutting wit. One can see that sensibility in his own performance here, turning Jake Gittes into someone who has made it, with a flourishing business in matrimonial detective work, but who remains forever out of control, haunted by his past and harassed by women, like a John Updike character with a Joker's grin and an impossibly wide, destabilising 40s suit out of *Stop Making Sense*.

Around Gittes, however, the movie is frozen – which in a way is the point, since what has permanently destabilised him is what happened eleven years ago in Chinatown. But this is to forget that the theme of the first film was already how hard it is to resolve the past: the *déjà vu* experiences of Gittes in that film have now become triply *vu*. It's a narrative paralysis that unfortunately extends to the rest of the film. The growth of Los Angeles was meant to be the subject here, as much as the tribulations of Jake Gittes, and Towne in fact planned a trilogy on the subject (which now seems unlikely to be completed). Underlying the political and biblical themes of the first film was a fascinating picture of Los Angeles as a desert city, and the power struggle over its life source, water.

The Two Jakes substitutes oil for water without adding much to the picture, just as Richard Farnsworth makes a perfunctory substitute for John Huston as the grizzled, treacherous patriarch. Everything that lifted *Chinatown* out of the retro private-eye rut has here become conventionalised in its turn, while Polanski's eye for the unnerving, subtly comic detail (Gittes' bandaged nose) has given way to more seismic narrative interruptions (literally, with no less than three earthquakes and one explosion). Not so much Chandler with a surrealist touch, *The Two Jakes* is more like a Polanski exercise (*Cul-de-Sac* or *What?*) converted into kitsch-romance.

Richard Combs

Valmont



Games: Colin Firth, Annette Bening...

Certificate

15

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production Companies

Renn Productions
(Paris)/Timothy Burrill
Productions (London)

Executive Producer

Claude Berri

Producers

Paul Rassam
Michael Hausman

Production Associate

USA:

Heidi Vogel

Production

Co-ordinator

Nathalie Farjon

Production Managers

Xavier Castano

Patrick Bordier

Unit Manager

Janou Shammass

Post-production

Supervisor

Kevin J. Foxe

Casting

Ellen Chenoweth

Maggie Cartier

France:

Margot Capelier

Gérard Moulévrier

Extras:

Marie-Sylvie Callierez

Pascal Béraud

Lotfi Mokdad

Assistant Directors

Olivier Horlait

Philippe Berenger

Jérôme Navarro

Pascal Baemler

Isabelle Henry

Screenplay

Jean-Claude Carrière

Adapted from the novel

Les Liaisons Dangereuses by

Choderlos de Laclos

Director of

Photography

Miroslav Ondricek

In colour

Camera Operators

Jean Harnois

2nd Unit:

Joseph Ort-Snep

Louma:

Geoff Brown

Steadicam Operator

Noël Very

Editors

Alan Heim

Nena Danevic

Production Designer

Pierre Guffroy

Art Directors

Albert Rajau

Loula Morin

Martina Skala

Set Dressers

Jacques-Albert Leguillon

Claude Suné

Scenic Artist

Jean Bretonnière

Special Effects

UK:

Garth Inns/Effects

Associates

France:

SFX 2A

Michel Norman

Models

André Marchand

Music

Christopher Palmer

Additional Scoring:

John Strauss

Music Director

Neville Marriner

Music Extracts

Overture and Finale

from "Tom Jones",

"Le Sorcier" by François-

André Danican Philidor;

Overture from "Richard

Coeur de Lion" by

André-Ernest-Modeste

Grétry; "Te Deum"

by Marc-Antoine

Charpentier; Minuet

from "Quartet in F

Opus 50, No.5"

by Joseph Haydn;

"Divertimento for

Winds in B. K240"

by Wolfgang

Amadeus Mozart;

"Les Oiseaux Éléphants",

"L'Apothéose de Lulli"

by François Couperin;

"Les Songes de

Dardanus" by Jean-

Philippe Rameau;

"A Knight Riding

through the Glade",

"Love, If You Will Come

to Me" by Baldassare

Galuppi, lyrics by Anne

Gyory, Hope Newman;

"Pity the Fate" by

François-André Danican

Philidor, lyrics by Anne

Gyory, Hope Newman

Music Performed by

The Orchestra of the

Academy of St Martin in

the Fields with the

Ambrosian Singers

Music Arrangements

Christopher Palmer

Supervising

Music Editor

John Strauss

Music Editor

Stuart Stanley

Choreography

Ann Jacoby

Costume Design

Theodore Pistek

Accessories:

Gaëlle Allen

Wardrobe

Co-ordinator:

Fabrizio Caracciolo

Supervisors:

Sylvie Gautrelet

Bernadette Villard

Women's Costumers:

Paule Mangelot

Carine Sarfati

Make-up

Design:

Paul LeBlanc

Artists:

Jean-Pierre Eychenne

Paul Lemarinel

Titles/Opticals

Euro-Titres

Supervising

Sound Editor

Maurice Schell

Sound Editors

Harry Bolles

Richard Cirincione

Kevin Lee

Mark Rathaus

Ahmad Shirazi

Bruce Kitzmeyer

ADR Editor

Deborah Wallach

Sound Recordist

Chris Newman

Music:

Dick Lewsey

Chuck Irwin

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recording

Lee Dichter

Production Assistants

Valérie Remise

Sylvie Duluc

Francis Barrois

Stanislas Robiollé

Jean-Benoît Doerr

Stéphane Roux

Pierre Souestre

Pierre Andrieu

Roland Riallot

Roland Farjon

Pierre Fournier

Patrice Gladel

Gérard Staub

Animal Trainers

Horses:

François Nadal

Dogs:

André Noël

Cast

Colin Firth

Vicomte de Valmont

Annette Bening

Marquise de Merteuil

Meg Tilly

Madame de Tourvel

Fairuz Balk

Cécile de Volanges

Sian Phillips

Madame de Volanges

Jeffrey Jones

Gercourt

Henry Thomas

Danceny

Fabia Drake

Madame de Rosemonde

T. P. McKenna

Baron

Isla Blair

Baroness

Ian McNeice

Azolan

Aleta Mitchell

Victoire

Ronald Lacey

José

Vincent Schiavelli

Jean

Sandrine Dumas

Martine

Sebastien Floche

Priest

Antony Carrick

President de Tourvel

Murray Gronwall

Flea Market Salesman

Alain Frérot

Daniel Laloux

Christian Bouillette

Thugs

John Arnold

Niels Tavernier

Knights of the Maltese

Order

Yvette Petit

Mother Superior

Richard de

Burnchurch

Volanges' Major-domo

José Licenziato

Blind Guitar Player

Ivan Palec

Servant

12,312 feet

137 minutes

English Version

France/United Kingdom 1989

Director: Milos Forman

1781. Fifteen-year-old Cécile de Volanges is removed from a convent by her mother and taken to Paris for a *mariage de raison*. Madame de Volanges, deceived by the 'mask of virtue' of her young widowed cousin, the Marquise de Merteuil, asks her to take charge of Cécile. Discovering that the bridegroom is her own secret lover, Monsieur de Gercourt, Commander of the Royal Guard, who is intending to drop her, the Marquise plans to take revenge by making sure that Cécile will not be a virgin bride.

To this end, she attempts to enlist the Vicomte de Valmont, a notorious womaniser, in Cécile's seduction. But he refuses with a dismissive "anyone can do that", and intends instead to enhance his 'dangerous' reputation by seducing the virtuous Madame de Tourvel, married to a judge, at the château of his aged aunt, Madame de Rosemonde. The Marquise suggests to Valmont that he is in love with Tourvel, which he counters with a wager that, if he succeeds, the Marquise will be his prize, and if he fails, he will retire to a monastery.

In Paris, the Marquise arranges a secret rendezvous in her erotic hideout between Cécile and her sentimental music teacher Danceny, who are engaged in an exchange of love letters (eventually masterminded by the Marquise and Valmont). But she fails to precipitate a seduction and removes Cécile to the country, where she finally engineers her seduction by Valmont. Tourvel, aroused by Valmont's insistent attentions, flees to her home, but pursued, succumbs to her love for him. The jubilant Valmont abandons Tourvel to claim his reward from the Marquise, but recognising her off-hand acquiescence as a declaration of 'war', he overturns her, bath and all.

After Tourvel appears for a night of love and disappears, Valmont tries to find her, then sends her roses. He asks the Marquise to marry him, and she leads him to Danceny in her bed. Informed by the Marquise that Valmont seduced Cécile, Danceny challenges him to a duel. Cécile, finally introduced to the grand Gercourt, rejects elopement with Danceny. Valmont goes to the duel drunk, and refusing Danceny's offer of truce, is killed.

At Valmont's lying-in-state, Cécile delights Valmont's aunt with the secret that she is carrying his child, and goes to her wedding with the unsuspecting Gercourt. The Marquise stands alone; Tourvel, accompanied by her husband, leaves a rose on Valmont's tomb.

● *Valmont*, the second adaptation of the classic epistolary novel by Capitaine Commandant de Lacroix – which transposed his interest in military fortifications and women's education to the erotic terrain – has awaited its release in Britain for a decent interval after the Frears/Hampton *Dangerous Liaisons*. That was a cold-climate, Fragonard version, focusing on the Marquise and Valmont as intriguers, prepared in formal dress and powdered wigs for erotic offensives. Milos Forman and screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière – resuming their collaboration from *Taking Off* – have changed the title and the ending in a free adaptation, and break through the stiffness of eighteenth-century manners with Watteau-esque nonchalance.

The sweeping brush strokes of Ondricek's photography, and the music and dance of *fêtes galantes* (complete with black maid), embraces the point of view of youth, play and desire over work, parental authority and social arrangements. The intrigues of the Vicomte and Marquise are presented as "juvenile antics", according to Forman, "at an age (around twenty-eight) at which one feels like an adult, but one does not know how to act like one". The film pivots on the character of Valmont, exemplifying qualities ascribed to him in the book by Tourvel ("intoxicated folly") and by the Marquise ("You are like a child to whom one can show nothing without his wanting to snatch it"), rather than his self-estimation as a cool, calculating conqueror.

On his way from Paris to the countryside, to besiege the well-guarded fortification of Tourvel's heart and body, he dallies to "hear the birds" and ponder the question, "Can one change?" The Marquise tries to hold him to their alliance by replying, "Only for the worse", but we are left with the question he himself cannot answer: is he playing or is he in earnest? A modern dilemma. This Valmont is brother to the impetuous

heroes of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Hair* and even *Amadeus*, who, in exuberant protest, die young. After a mock duel with Cécile, Valmont goes to his fatal duel with Danceny, treating the occasion as a kind of 'happening' rather than a ritual of honour.

The Marquise is older sister to Valmont and Cécile. She likes to play with Valmont and abet him in his play with others, treating his wager, his offer of marriage, and her own offer of her body as a joke. The difference between the two film versions is encapsulated in the delight with which Colin Firth and Annette Bening dictate Danceny and Cécile's love letters, drenched in brown, green and red, touched with gold, contrasted with the sustained deadly tension of John Malkovich and Glenn Close as they receive each other's letters in white, pink and blue rococo interiors.

The trouble with *Valmont* is that while it uncovers the libidinous impulses behind the masks of virtue, it presents us with another mask, that of a knowing infantilism. It disingenuously leaves us to disentangle the similarities and differences between the principled libertinism of the age of Casanova and de Sade and the idealistic libertarian permissiveness of the 1960s. Carrière sees the book's ending as a "moral massacre, a concession to the censorship of the times". In this version, the 'danger' implicit in being caught breaking the rules of society and the heart has been taken out of the title and the ending.

Madame de Tourvel is not allowed to die for love; Cécile and Danceny do not retire to convent in disgrace or monastery in disgust; the Marquise is not unmasked socially nor ruined financially in the courts. The film avoids suffering and only suggests the pains of compromise. It's a 'happy' ending which lowers, or at least changes, the moral and political stakes of the game.

Ilona Halberstadt



...and masks: Annette Bening

Ex

Distributor
BBC TV
Production Company
TalkBack
For Screen One
Executive Producers
Richard Broke
Peter Fincham
Producer
Jacinta Peel
Associate Producer
J. Clive Hedges
Production Co-ordinator
Gillian Dawes
Location Manager
Sarah Fiddian
Casting
Anne Henderson
Assistant Directors
John Older
Trevor Puckle
Screenplay
William Humble
Director of Photography
Ken Westbury
In colour
Graphic Designer
Richard Morrison
Editor
Don Fairservice
Production Designer
Michael Pickwood
Music
Jim Parker
Costume Design
Jacqueline Parry
Make-up
Ann McEwan
Sound Editor
Brian Roberts
Sound Recordist
Colin Chapman
Sound Re-recordist
Peter Smith

Cast
Griff Rhys-Jones
Patrick
Geraldine James
Alice
Penny Downie
Sheila
Jonathan Hackett
Colin
Dermot Crowley
Simon
Sebastian Knapp
Andrew
Kate Maberly
Christine
Mary Jo Randle
Jill
Margery Mason
Joan
Bruce Montague
Phillip
Lindy Alexander
Melanie
Colin Douglas
Donald
Christopher Scouler
Mark
Nigel Gregory
TV Director
Siobhan Hayes
Babysitter
David Rolfe
TV Dad
Lucy Parker
Shop Assistant
Neville Phillips
Waiter
Emma Myant
TV Wine Bar
Customer
David Milligan
Garage Attendant
James Curran
Marian Breen
Party Guests
Toby Cockerell
Boy at Shopping Mall
Thomas Sexton
Jack Brockman
Baby

8,100 feet
90 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Paul Seed

TV **Patrick** is a middle-class, middle-aged scriptwriter for a popular TV soap opera. He has been divorced from Sheila for two years, but though she has remarried, their relationship isn't quite resolved, and Patrick still sees their two children every weekend. Eleven-year-old Andrew and his younger sister Christine are constantly squabbling, and Christine in particular is suspicious of Patrick's new girlfriend Alice, a glamorous, strong-willed actress from the soap. Alice tries to make terms with them, but she is jealous of Patrick's family, and conscious that he is demanding an unequal commitment from her.

Sheila is in the latter stages of pregnancy, and when her new husband Colin phones Patrick with news of the birth, Patrick makes an embarrassing exit from Alice's dinner party. When he returns later that night, they argue. Alice insists that she has no wish for children of her own, and furthermore, she doesn't care about his. Outraged, Patrick walks out.

Some weeks later, the rift has not been healed, and more conflict is brewing. Patrick's script impregnates Alice (as June) and has her accept a part-time relationship with the father. Alice refuses to play it, and Patrick is forced to rewrite. This time, he thinks back to his divorce and conceives the scene from Sheila's point of view – Alice/June breaks off the relationship and determines to have the child on her own. The episode inspires conciliatory calls from Sheila and from Alice, after which Patrick allows himself to imagine having his cake and eating it.

In the event, Sheila firmly rejects his tentative advances, and when Christine blurts out details of the episode, it is the last straw for Alice. Not only does she leave him, she also reveals that her character is leaving the soap for a feminist spin-off of her own, to be written entirely by women.

Patrick eventually finds himself back in the bosom of his family, going out for a drink with Colin. Andrew soberly assures his father that in future he and Christine will welcome his actress girlfriends: "We're older now... we understand".

● In synopsis, William Humble's second script for the current season of Screen One sounds unconscionably 'BBC': another dramatisation of white, male, middle-class concerns – divorce, kids, relationships – and with a writer-hero to boot. This impression is immediately qualified by the ►

Reviews

Valmont
Ex

◀ film's shrewd, ironic perspective. The material may be familiar, but the approach is refreshingly acute.

We first meet Patrick in a toy shop. Intelligent, witty, and recognisably a New Man, he is still, evidently, a Child Man. Caught between the unaffected domesticity of his ex-wife Sheila – housewife and mother – and the glamorous sophistication of his girlfriend Alice – independent post-feminist – Patrick wants both. Unable to choose, he tries to keep the two women apart, and when Alice takes the initiative and breaks down the artificial barrier, he tries to recast her in the maternal role she adamantly rejects, in life and in the soap opera he writes. Nor is Patrick above imagining Sheila as a lover. In the film's sharpest scene, his friendly concern is so transparently a line that he finds himself out the door almost before the words have left his mouth.

Patrick's dilemma is still the same old story: does he want a liberated sexual partner, or a mother



New Man, old story: Penny Downie, Griff Rhys-Jones, Geraldine James

for his children? It's also true that Alice and Sheila have their own designs on Patrick. Alice throws away his old clothes and puts him in fashionable modern threads – to Sheila's dismay ("You look like a vicar!") – while left to his own devices, he dons new jacket and old jeans, a subtle example of his personal confusion. The children enjoy a privileged position in the drama, in that they are party to both of their father's relationships without inheriting the sexual/social requirements that make life so difficult for the adults.

As not quite innocent bystanders, they are the agents of chaos whose surly honesty punctures the fond hypocrisies of all around them. It is much to the credit of Humble and director Paul Seed that these kids are no more sentimentalised than soap operas are spoofed. With appealing performances from all three principals, this judicious TV comedy works through identification, not dissociation.

Tom Charity

Filipina Dreamgirls



No sterner test of male moral fibre

Distributor

BBC TV

Production Company

BBC Wales TV

Executive Producers

Ruth Caleb

Richard Broke

Producer

Jacinta Peel

Production Associate

Philippines:

Jan-Michel Gautier

Production Co-ordinators

Antonio Espeleta

Rowena De Los Reyes

Location Manager

Philippines:

Romulo Ramos

Casting

Anne Hopkinson

Philippines:

Ken Metcalfe

Assistant Directors

Brett Fallis

Lisa Gravelle

Herman Robles

Gene Rose

Screenplay

Andrew Davies

Director of Photography

Ashley Rowe

In colour

Editor

Tim Kruydenberg

Production Designers

Steve Talbot

Roger Davies

Sammy Aranzaendez

Graphic Designer

Alison Jenkins

Music

Simon Brint

Song

"Dreaming" by Simon

Brint, Lise Mayer,

performed by Hope

Augustus

Costume Design

Brian Willis

Rosemary Cheshire

Make-up

Catherine Davies

Barbara Roberts

Edith Sanchez

Sound Editors

Paul Jeffries

Sound Recordists

Richard Dyer

Kevin Meredith

Sound Re-recorder

Tim Ricketts

Production Assistant

Jan Arwyn Jones

Cast

Bill Maynard

George Trout

Charlie Drake

Lionel

Geoffrey Hutchings

Carwyn Phillips

Lee Cornes

Preston Stott

David Thewlis

Tim Shanks

Ray Gravell

Gareth

Grace Amilbangsa

Marietta Modestas

Angie V. Cantero

Rosanna

Majesty Gaerlan

Arquita

Max Phipps

Ray

Roxanne Silverio

Rosie

Andrea Arroyo

Julie

Sylvia Garde

Ignacia

Juliet Jimenez

Martita

Ressie Manuel

Dorita

Pita Liboro

Elena

Elsie Astete

Mamasan

Madonna de Vera

Tim's Bargirl

Hermana

Concepcion

Marietta's Mother

Connie Chua

Cora

Marissa Aclan

Woman on Video

Daniel Galano

Jeepney Driver

8,100 feet

90 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Les Blair



Five Welshmen go to the Philippines to find the brides of their dreams. Accompanied by their long-suffering guide Mr. Trout, they rapidly discover that Philippine women are not the exotic pushovers they imagined. Carwyn, a gentle fiftysomething from Cardiff, is shocked to find that the bride of his choice is an educated woman with a complicated past. Tim, a crane driver in pursuit of sexual adventure, is as skilfully fended off as he would be in any British night-club.

On a visit to a strip joint, Tim and Preston (an unlikely Casanova from the vehicle licensing centre in Swansea) resort to the services of local prostitutes: meanwhile, Carwyn's fiancée Marietta reveals that poverty once drove her into the arms of a rich businessman. The next morning, Preston returns with a big grin and Tim with his pockets empty. By the end of their third day in Manila, all the men – apart from Lionel, who vanished at the airport – are engaged: Carwyn to Marietta, Preston and Tim to respectable young Filipinas, and Gareth to the serving girl at the men's hostel.

After a night of passion – or, in Preston's case, frustration – the couples gather to hear instructions for returning to Britain. But Preston is so irritated by Trout's growing contempt for his clients that he storms off. The others set out for a day at the beach, where they encounter Ray, a vicious South African bar owner who turns out to be Marietta's former 'protector'.

At the airport for the flight home, Lionel reappears and Preston arrives, having exchanged his prudish fiancée for the prostitute with whom he once spent the night. In time, Carwyn and Marietta are settled in an idyllic Welsh valley; Tim's wife has left him because of his "mindless proletarian life style"; and the ever-resourceful Preston has set up his own Anglo-Filipino dating agency.

As one of our leading style journalists once put it, there is no sterner test of male moral fibre than being in a far-flung hot spot where you can buy a night of pleasure with several stunning women for the price of a few beers – and this is the dilemma which *Filipina Dreamgirls* sets out to explore. The aim is to show up this group of Western sexual predators as more inadequate than their supposed victims, and to bring to the screen the rare spectacle of men talking intimately. In their journey through a pre-feminist paradise (where, according to one, "the Filipina is the last real woman left on earth – she'll

do anything for you"), the men discover not just their brides but themselves.

Coming from the pen of Andrew Davies (who wrote the 'New Man' novel *Getting Hurt*, as well as the TV drama *House of Cards*), it is unsurprising that the film comes across as a self-lacerating male consciousness-raising session. Carwyn's romantic ideals take a beating from Marietta's bottom-line approach to sexual economics, while Gareth realises for the first time that women are forced into prostitution by brute necessity rather than nymphomania. The main problem with this fashionable hatchet-job on macho illusions is that it's all so predictable. Of course the Filipinas are smarter than their lumbering Welsh companions – they have to be to survive. It's hardly a revelation that they're in it for the money – why else would they tolerate these charmless buffoons?

Les Blair's semi-improvised approach to ensemble playing also treads a treacherous tightrope. While it conveys a sense of genuine interaction unachievable with conventional scripted methods, it does result in the typecasting of each of the men – the caring, sensitive one, the aggressive philandering one – who are collectively supposed to stand for men in general. Issue-based drama of this kind – whether uncovering the activities of the sexual tourist or, as in Blair's previous *Newshounds*, the shady world of the tabloid press – poses a dilemma for the viewer. It's uncertain whether one is supposed to identify with the human drama, or simply enjoy the journalistic revelations about a world normally closed to the cameras. While *Newshounds* offered a fascinating glimpse of life-behind-the-scenes in a British tabloid newspaper, it suffered from the high moral tone it adopted towards its subject, leaving one caring little about the hideous creatures on display.

Similarly, no one can fail to laugh at the self-important Preston, banging off multiple applications for brides on his home computer, or stomping around Manila in shorts and a bum-bag. But there is a temptation to overlook the bittersweet message of human inadequacy in favour of the simple delights of social voyeurism. Rather than being seen as victims of their circumstances, as much as their Filipina brides, the Welshmen – with their naivety and their page-three sexual sensibility – are offered up for straightforward mockery. After several salutary blows to their sturdy Welsh male egos, they emerge as a foolish and not particularly sympathetic group of characters.

Adam Barker

Prince

Distributor
BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Films
For Screen One
Executive Producer
Richard Broke
Producer
Ruth Baumgarten
Production Associate
Ian Hopkins
Production Managers
Allan Charlesworth
Kate Bradley
Casting
Di Carling
Assistant Directors
Tim Stevenson
Ian Sheward
Screenplay
Julie Burchill
Director of Photography
John Hooper
In colour
Camera Operator
Andrew Godfrey
Graphics Designer
Clive Harris
Editor
Roy Sharman
Production Designer
Paul Joel
Music
Bill Connor
Costume Designer
Rita Reekie
Make-up Designer
Christine Walmsley-
Cotham
Sound Editor
Ed Bazalgette
Sound Recorder
Colin March
Sound Re-recorder
Colin Martin
Animal Trainers/Consultants
Intellectual Animals

Cast
Sean Bean
Jack Morgan
Celia Montague
Marie Morgan
Janet McTeer
Adult Claudie
Jackie McGuire
Claudie Morgan
William Armstrong
Tom
Marie Clifford
Jeannie
Susan Brown
Mrs Tribbly
David Plimmer
Ron
Gabrielle Cowburn
Carol
Cheryl Woodcock
Linda
Mark Tandy
Vet
Roger McKern
Cab Driver
Jeremy Carrad
Television Newsreader
Rebecca Goodwin
Denise
Cheryl Woodcock
Linda
Hayley Foster
Shelley Hastings
Beatrice Fenton
Aparil Iles
Lynch Mob
Ross
Solo
Prince

6,750 feet
75 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: David Wheatley

With her parents, Jack and Marie, Claudie Morgan visits the grave of their family Alsatian, Prince, who died twenty years ago. While Jack weeps helplessly, Claudie recalls her dog-dominated childhood... Jack Morgan, a factory worker in Bristol, lives only for Prince. To the despair of his French wife, Marie, Prince tyrannises the household, scaring visitors and showing particular aversion to pregnant women. Though gentle with Claudie, he senses Marie's dislike of him, and often blocks her way to the lavatory, forcing her to run desperately round to neighbouring houses.

Jack's sole recreation is walking Prince to the pub, along with his friend Ron and the latter's Doberman, Scamp. Marie eventually persuades Jack to take a holiday at a seaside camp, leaving Prince in a kennel, but en route Jack stops the train and rushes back to fetch Prince. Since dogs are barred from the camp, he and Prince spend the holiday in a nearby boarding-house.

When Jack enters Prince in a dog show, the dog causes an uproar, attacking the other animals and the judges. Claudie, growing aware of her mother's unhappiness, tries to poison Prince, but merely makes him vomit. Thanks to Prince's anti-social behaviour, the family becomes increasingly isolated, and Marie's misery deepens. Jack even quarrels with Ron, after what he takes to be a slur on Prince's manhood.

Refusing to admit his dog is growing old, Jack reluctantly leaves for a trades union meeting in Blackpool. While he is away, Prince dies. Marie and Claudie spend a delirious week of uninhibited freedom. On his return Jack is agonised with grief... Musing on her childhood, and on her father's singleminded devotion, the adult Claudie returns to her luxury high-rise London flat. She is warmly greeted – by an Alsatian.

A wintry graveyard, black-branched trees reaching for the sky. A small group – mother, father, daughter – gathered desolately by a graveside to mourn a departed family member. And on the headstone, the picture of a leering, tongue-lolling Alsatian dog. It's a good gag, and Julie Burchill evidently thinks so, because she repeats it, with variations, for the next seventy-five minutes. In a slip of the tongue, Jack, addressing Claudie, refers to Prince as "your brother". At Christmas, he produces a piece of mistletoe, and Marie looks hopeful – until he holds it over the dog's head.

Prince, Burchill has explained, is strongly autobiographical, and "the easiest and best thing I've written". 'Easiest' can well be believed. Writing it must have exorcised a great many ghosts, but treated straight the material is too thin to sustain its feature length. Some other element – and maybe a little work – was needed to lift it beyond the level of anecdote. There is, it's true, a perfunctory stab at a political dimension by making Jack a Communist as well as dog-mad, and giving him some naive dialogue about Russia ("Very cold, very clean, and everybody's happy"). But all this leads to is some equally stilted anti-Communist stuff from Marie: "Like all those who believe in the brotherhood of man, you don't like real people because we can't live up to your ideals".

What is most irritating – especially given the excellence of the acting, both human and canine – is that there are glimpses of a far more subtle and complex film, one that could have used the man-dog bond to illuminate a whole tangle of attitudes around the abuses and fears of entrenched masculinity. But in the end, *Prince* backs off, taking refuge in easy banalities. "Quite simply he loved Prince more than he loved me – more than he loved anyone. Maybe I'm cold and unnatural, but I can't see anything wrong with that. You make your choices in this life". And we end where we began – with a neat visual gag.

Philip Kemp



Shaggy-dog anecdote: Sean Bean

Rental

Mark Kermode reviews every rental/
rental premiere video released this month
and William Green reviews every retail/
retail premiere video



Western Crusoe:
Kevin Costner

★ Highlights

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* (MFB) and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses

Rental

Alligator

Braveworld 40420 BRV 10129
USA 1980

Certificate 15 Director Lewis Teague
★ Classic monster-movie spoof, balancing laughs and thrills and boasting a vintage script by John Sayles. Released with *Alligator II: The Mutation* (see Rental Premiere). (MFB No. 578)

American Friends

MCEG Virgin Vision VVP 890
UK 1991

Certificate PG Director Tristram Powell
★ Michael Palin as a beleaguered Oxford don in a tale inspired by his great-grandfather's life. The result is delightful. (MFB No. 687)

Blood Oath

RCA/Columbia CVT 12120
Australia 1990

Certificate 15 Director Stephen Wallace
Jason Donovan provides a brief cameo in a lacklustre drama about the war trials of Japanese soldiers. (MFB No. 687)

Dances with Wolves

Guild 8652
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Kevin Costner
★ Costner's lavish directorial debut is surprisingly sure-footed. A Civil War soldier finds friendship among American Indians. (MFB No. 685)

Defending Your Life

Warner East 12049
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Albert Brooks
An LA executive dies and goes to 'Judgment City' where he has nine days to justify himself. Meryl Streep stars with Brooks. (S&S August 1991)

The Doors

Guild 8650
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Oliver Stone
Stone's lengthy and bloated portrayal of Jim Morrison keeps the legend alive and kicking. (MFB No. 687)

Encounter at Raven's Gate

RCA Columbia CVT 13779
Australia 1988

Certificate 15 Director Rolf de Heer
Oddball sci-fi outing about a small town beset by unidentified aliens. (MFB No. 675)

Everybody Wins

MCEG Virgin Vision MVP 792
UK 1990

Certificate 15 Director Karel Reisz
Debra Winger and Nick Nolte star in this strange detective story, Arthur Miller's first screenplay since *The Misfits*. (S&S May 1991)

Graveyard Shift

20.20 NVT 12854
USA 1990

Certificate 18
Director Ralph S. Singleton
Moribund adaptation of Stephen King's short story about a factory cellar which harbours a mutant rat-bat hybrid. (S&S June 1991)

Guilty by Suspicion

Warner East PEV 12503
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Irwin Winkler
Sanitised but nonetheless sobering portrayal of McCarthyism and its effect on 50s Hollywood. With Robert De Niro. (S&S June 1991)

Kindergarten Cop

CIC VHA 1493
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Ivan Reitman
Flimsy comedy laced with occasional darkness. Big Arnie Schwarzenegger goes undercover as a schoolteacher. (MFB No. 685)

King of New York

Palace PVC 21755
USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Abel Ferrara
★ Video of the month! Christopher Walken excels in Ferrara's ferocious

portrayal of corruption and vice in New York. (S&S July 1991)

Nightbreed

MGM/UA Warner 54230
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Clive Barker
★ Barker's ambitious screen adaptation of his novel *Cabal* is a flawed but fascinating piece, full of mutants and monsters. Ripe for reappraisal. (MFB No. 681)

Nothing But Trouble

Warner PEV 12172
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Dan Aykroyd
Scant laughs in this Dan Aykroyd/Chevy Chase vehicle about the woebegone town of Valkenvania. (S&S October 1991)

Not Without My Daughter

MGM/UA Warner West 54237
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Brian Gilbert
Grim portrayal of misogyny in Iran, uplifted by Alfred Molina's bold performance, but betrayed by a distasteful pro-US zealotism. (S&S July 1991)

Paris Trout

Palace PVC 2266R
USA 1991

Certificate 18
Director Stephen Gyllenhaal
Racial tension, 1949 style, in the Deep South provides the backdrop for an ensemble piece showcasing the talents of Dennis Hopper, Ed Harris and Barbara Hershey. (S&S October 1991)

Predator 2

FoxVideo 1853
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Stephen Hopkins
Dreadful sequel to a ropery original, lacking the star presence of Schwarzenegger and devoid of tension or thrills. (S&S May 1991)

Problem Child

CIC VHA 1470
USA 1990

Certificate PG Director Dennis Dugan
A couple adopt a young boy whose near satanic wickedness drives them to distraction. (MFB No. 683)

Scenes from a Mall

Touchstone D34094
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Paul Mazursky
Uneven comedy with Woody Allen and Bette Midler conducting their marital rows in public. (S&S June 1991)

Sibling Rivalry

First Independent VA 20140

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Carl Reiner
Kirstie Alley stars as a bored housewife whose one-night-stand lover dies during a post-coital faint. Limp. (S&S June 1991)

The Silence of the Lambs

20.20 NVT 12819

USA 1990

Certificate 18

Director Jonathan Demme

★ Excellent adaptation of Thomas Harris' novel which maintains a balance between the credible and the surreal. Terrifying and exhilarating, plus a fine performance by Jodie Foster. (S&S June 1991)

Trust

Palace PVC 2206R

UK/USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Hal Hartley

★ Splendidly odd-ball and beautifully observed black comedy about two misfit teenagers finding love in a world of crumbling values. (S&S September 1991)

White Palace

CIC VHA 1501

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Luis Mandoki
James Spader plays a young man besotted by middle-aged waitress Susan Sarandon in an intriguing romantic drama. (MFB No. 687)

Zandalee

ITC 8005

USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Sam Pillsbury
Nicolas Cage inserts cocaine-smeared fingers into Erika Anderson's orifices in a sillier-than-sexy 'erotic thriller'. (MFB No. 687)

Rental premiere

Alligator II: The Mutation

Braveworld 40420 BRV 10127

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Jon Hess
Producer Brandon Chase Screenplay Curt Allen Lead Actors Joseph Bologna, Dee Wallace Stone, Richard Lynch, Woody Brown 90 minutes
Sequel to the 1980 cult hit *Alligator*. Toxic waste turns a sewer-bound alligator into a monstrous giant. Released in conjunction with *Alligator* (see Rental).



Driller Killer: Christopher Walken in 'King of New York'

Bad Attitude

ITC 7760

USA 1987

Certificate 15 Director Ed Sherin
Producer Phil Parslow Screenplay Arthur Heinemann Lead Actors Louis Gossett Jr., Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Carroll O'Connor 87 minutes
Good performance by Gossett in a workable 'true-life' TV movie about the plight of Chicago's street-wise youngsters.

Beastmaster 2:

Through the Portals of Time

Medusa MC 370

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director/Producer Sylvio Tabet Screenplay R.J. Robertson, Jim Wynorski, Sylvio Tabet Lead Actors Kari Wuhrer, Sarah Douglas, Wings Hauser 102 minutes
Ancient druid culture merges with modern-day LA attitude in this jolly fantasy sequel. Hauser is very funny as the fiendish Arkon, sporting terrible make-up and a winning leer.

Bethune: The Making of a Hero

RCA Columbia CVT 12019

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Phillip Borsos
Producers Nicolas Clermont, Pieter Kroonenburg Screenplay Ted Allan Lead Actors Donald Sutherland, Helen Mirren, Helen Shaver, Colm Feore 111 minutes
Enigmatic Dr Bethune (Sutherland) struggles to forge a healthy future in this classy drama set in 1938 China. Solid performances and eye-catching scenery.

The Company II: Sacrifices

Warner East 12232

USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Michael Fresco
Producer Kevin Droney Screenplay Thania St John Lead Actors Anthony John Denison, Linda Purl, John Rhys-Davies 89 minutes
More espionage, set this time in

Kuwait City, 1990 – winner of the award for the fastest cash-in on a war.

Criminal Justice

Warner West 25015

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Andy Wolk
Producer Michael Nozik Screenplay Andy Wolk Lead Actors Forest Whitaker, Jennifer Grey, Rosie Perez, Anthony LaPlagia 87 minutes
A woman fights a legal battle against a man she claims slashed her face; Jennifer Grey is the attorney determined to see justice done.

Dolly Dearest

First Independent VVA 20139

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Maria Lease
Producer Daniel Cady Screenplay Maria Lease Lead Actors Denise Crosby, Sam Bottoms, Chris Demetral, Candy Hutson 90 minutes
Child's Play-type horror about a young girl and a possessed doll.

Fist of Fury II

VPD 460

Country and Year Unknown

Certificate 18 Director Jimmy Shaw
Producers Jimmy Shaw, R.P. Shah Screenplay Unknown Lead Actors Bruce Li, Lo Leth 96 minutes



A world of crumbling values in 'Trust'

Bruce Li's name sounds the same as Bruce Lee, but the king has not risen from the grave.

Flight of Black Angel

CIC VHB 2528

USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Jonathan Mostow Producers Kevin M. Kallberg, Oliver G. Hess Screenplay Henry Dominic Lead Actors Peter Strauss, William O'Leary, James O'Sullivan, Michele Pawk 98 minutes

★ Gripping airborne thriller. A US air force pilot suffers a breakdown, slaughters his family and then takes to the skies on an apocalyptic mission. A good script and lots of rocket-speed action.

The Forgotten One

Warner East 54231

USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Phillip Badger Producers Peter Garrity, Andy Andersen Screenplay Phillip Badger Lead Actors Terry O'Quinn, Kristy McNichol 94 minutes
Muddled horror-romance enlivened by Badger's nippy direction. A writer is haunted by the spirit of a lover from a past life.

Harley

High Fliers HFV 8102

USA 1990

Certificate PG Director/Producer Fred Holmes Screenplay Frank Kuntz, Sandy Kuntz Lead Actor Lou Diamond Phillips 85 minutes
Lou Diamond Phillips stars as a tearaway serving probation on a Texas ranch where his love of bikes becomes a redemptive force.

The Haunted

FoxVideo 1918

USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Robert Mandel Producer Daniel Scheider Screenplay Darrah Cloud, based on the book by Robert Curran, Jack Smurl, Janet Smurl, Ed Warren, Lorraine Warren Lead Actors Sally Kirkland, Jeffrey De Munn, Louise Latham, George D. Wallace 97 minutes
Spiced-up account of the Smurls' 'true' ordeal in their haunted house. Essentially a rehashing of *The Amityville Horror*, notable only for the scene in which Jack Smurl is raped by an apparition of his daughter.

Homer and Eddie

MCEG Virgin Vision VVP 890

USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director Andrei Konchalovsky Producers Moritz Borman, James Cady Screenplay Patrick Cirillo Lead Actors James Belushi, Whoopi Goldberg, Karen

Black, Nancy Parsons, Anne Ramsey
95 minutes
Sentimental 'odd-couple-on-the-road'
pic pairing a terminally ill and
incurably stropky woman with
a sweet-minded simpleton.

**Hyper Sapien:
People from Another Star**

Warner West PEV 35202
USA 1986

Certificate U Director Peter Hunt
Producer Jack Schwartzman Screenplay
Christopher Adcock, Christopher
Blue, Marnie Paige Lead Actors Ricky
Paull Goldin, Sydney Penny, Keenan
Wynn 90 minutes
Innocuous sci-fi fantasy inspired
by (and derivative of) ET.

The Immortalizer

20.20 NVT 12870
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Joel Bender
Producer Frederick Wolcott Screenplay
Mark Nelson Lead Actors Ron Ray,
Chris Crone, Melody Patterson,
Clarke Lindsley 92 minutes
Goofy horror fare – Dr Devine uses
teenage bodies to house the brains
of dying clients.

Invisible Maniac

Medusa MC 361
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Rif Coogan
Producer Matt Devlen Screenplay Rif
Coogan Lead Actors Noel Peters,
Melissa Moore, Shannon Wilsey
84 minutes
A voyeuristic teen-vehicle which
turns into an unpleasant comic tale
of sexual vengeance. Top marks for
the tag-line ("He's out of sight and
out of his mind!") but nil for the rest.

Kick Fighter

VPD 4556
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director/Producer Anthony
Maharaj Screenplay Anthony Maharaj,
Noah Blough Lead Actors Richard
Norton, Glenn Ruehland, Franco
Guerrero 93 minutes
Pretty-boy Norton goes through the
motions in this plodding genre
movie. Unremarkable fight
sequences, weak direction and
a throwaway plot.

Love, Lies and Murder

Odyssey ODY 305
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Robert
Markowitz Producer Jay Benson
Screenplay Danielle Hill Lead Actors
Clancy Brown, Sheryl Lee, Moira
Kelly, John Ashton 182 minutes
TV serial based on the true story of
Cinnamon Brown and Patti Bailey,
who were persuaded by David Arnold

Brown to participate in the murder
of his wife. A very bizarre tale.

Night of the Hunter

Capital CHV 1016
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director David Greene
Executive Producer Diana Kerew
Teleplay Edmond Stevens, based on
the novel by Davis Grubb Lead Actors
Richard Chamberlain, Reid Binion,
Burgess Meredith, Diana Scarwid
88 minutes
Perfunctory remake of Charles
Laughton's 1955 classic with
Chamberlain in the role
immortalised by Robert Mitchum.

Not of This World

CIC VHB 2546
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Jon Daniel Hess
Producer Jonathan Brauer Screenplay
Robert Glass Lead Actors Pat Hingle,
Luke Edwards, Lisa Hartman,
A. Martinez 89 minutes
Clichéd invaders-from-space yarn,
made risible by the ungainly rubber
monster and ridiculous dialogue –
"Let's reverse the polarities!" scream
the earthlings in true *Star Trek* style.

The Pit and the Pendulum

EV EVV 1185
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Stuart Gordon
Producer Albert Band Screenplay
Dennis Paoli, based on the short
story by Edgar Allan Poe Lead Actors
Lance Henriksen, Roma de Ricci,
Jonathan Fuller, Mark Margolis,
Jeffrey Combs, Tom Towles, Oliver
Reed 92 minutes
★ "I must invent new and more
terrible tortures!" declares a
diabolical Torquemada (Henriksen)
in Gordon's uncompromising
adaptation of Poe. Sado-masochistic
torture scenes and a brief wine-
guzzling cameo by Oliver Reed make
this beautifully repugnant.

Running Against Time

CIC VHA 1498
USA 1990

Certificate U Director Bruce Seth Green
Producer David Roessell Screenplay
Stanley Shapiro, Robert Glass Lead
Actors Robert Hayes, Catherine Hicks,
Sam Wanamaker 89 minutes
History professor David Rhodes
travels back in time to prevent
Kennedy's assassination, thus saving
his brother from death in Vietnam.
Rehash of *Back to the Future* pitched
at younger viewers.

Scanners 2: The New Order

Braveworld/Warner East 52023
Canada 1990

Director Christian Duguay Producer

Rene Malo Screenplay B.S. Nelson
Lead Actors David Hewlett, Deborah
Raffin, Tom Butler 109 minutes
Gory sequel to David Cronenberg's
sci-fi splatter classic, featuring none
of the creators of the original –
explosive but unnecessary.

Son of the Morning Star

Odyssey ODY 308
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Mike Robe
Producers Preston Fischer, Cyrus
Yavneh Screenplay Melissa Mathison
Lead Actors Rosanna Arquette, Gary
Cole, Dean Stockwell, Rodney
A. Grant 174 minutes
TV mini-series retelling the story of
Custer's Last Stand from American
Indian and white perspectives.

Spellcaster

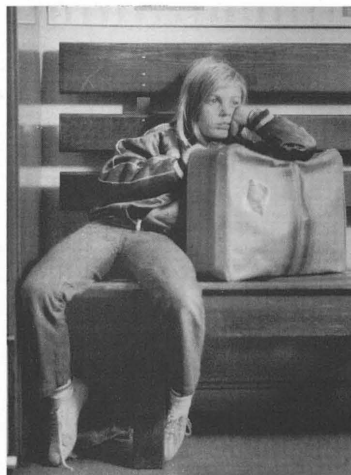
RCA/Columbia CVT 12019
USA 1988

Certificate 15 Director Rafal Zielinski
Producer Roberto Besso Screenplay
Dennis Paoli, Charles Bogel Lead
Actors Richard Blade, Gail O'Grady,
Harold "R" Pruett, Buntly Bailey,
Traci Lin 79 minutes
Standard fantasy movie (made by
trash stalwarts Empire) about
teenagers taking part in a deadly
TV game show. Camp cameo by
Adam Ant as the devil (Diablo) and
some nice creature effects, but
otherwise unremarkable.

Street Asylum

Medusa MC 245
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Gregory Brown
Producer Walter D. Gernert Screenplay
John Powers Lead Actors Wings
Hauser, G. Gordon Liddy, Alex Cord,
Brion Jammes 89 minutes
★ Inventive exploitation pic which
buries a thought-provoking theme
under layers of uncompromising
sleaze. Policeman Ryder (Hauser)
becomes an unwitting guinea-pig
in an experiment which turns
lawmen into lunatics. Brown evokes a
nightmare world of mad religions



Landmark: 'Alice in the Cities'

and impending social chaos. Great.

Victim of Love

Capital CHV 1019
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Jerry London
Producer Gary Goldstein Screenplay
James J. Desmarais, Alison Rosenfeld
Desmarais Lead Actors Pierce Brosnan,
Jobeth Williams, Virginia Madsen
88 minutes
Slow, romantic psycho-drama
promising sexy thrills but failing
to deliver.

Wedlock

EV EVV 1206
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Lewis Teague
Producer Branko Lustig Screenplay
Broderick Miller Lead Actors Rutger
Hauer, Mimi Rogers, Joan Chen
98 minutes
Sci-fi pic starring Hauer as a
futuristic convict bound by a deadly
device to a fellow villain (Rogers).
Nice idea, unsatisfying results.

Retail

**Alice in the Cities
(Alice in den Städten)**

Connoisseur CR 046
West Germany 1974 Price £14.99

Certificate U Director Wim Wenders
★ A taciturn photo-journalist
(Rudiger Vogeler) and a nine-year-
old girl (Yella Rottländer) team up
in a seminal odd-couple road movie,
shot by Robby Müller. Subtitles B/W
(MFB No. 501)

Amsterdamed

First Fright VA 30198
Netherlands 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Dick Maas
Miami Vice speedboat stunts on the
canals of Holland. Plenty of thrills
and spills, with Huub Stapel as the
inspector. Subtitles (MFB No. 666)

Blithe Spirit

Warner PES 90150
UK 1945 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director David Lean
★ Noel Coward's finest drawing-room
farce sparkles with the elegance of
Rex Harrison and Kay Hammond.
Margaret Rutherford rattles her
bracelets as the medium Madame
Arcati. B/W (MFB No. 136)

David Copperfield

MGM/UA Classics PES 50649
USA 1934 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director George Cukor
★ Brilliantly compressed version of

Dickens' novel, with Edna May Oliver as Aunt Betseym and W.C. Fields immortalising Mr Micawber. Sadly, twenty minutes have been cut from the original. B/W (MFB No. 14)

Death Race 2000

Braveworld STV 2039

USA 1975 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Paul Bartel

★ Cultish, lurid quickie from the Roger Corman garage, with David Carradine and the then unknown Sylvester Stallone playing killer-bumper-cars at top speed across America. (MFB No. 505)

Dick Tracy

Touchstone D 410662

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Warren Beatty

Warren Beatty takes on crime lord Al Pacino, while night-club singer Madonna models corsets. Brilliant sets, dull goings-on. (MFB No. 679)

Doctor Zhivago

MGM/UA PES 50003

USA 1965 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director David Lean

The Russian Revolution foils Omar Sharif's ambitions to take off with Julie Christie. Lush, romantic epic, beautifully shot but lacking any sense of proportion. (MFB No. 389)

Family Business

Legend LGV 10060

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Sidney Lumet

Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman and Matthew Broderick are strangely miscast as three generations of a New York family of bankrobbers and fraudsters. (MFB No. 674)

Fantasia

Disney D211322, D212362

USA 1940 Price £13.99 or £49.99 (deluxe edition)

Certificate U Director Walt Disney

★ Whether seen as a monumental folly of 'klassical kitsch' or an ingenious kaleidoscope, this piece of Disney animation is undoubtedly unique, and has been given a limited release of three months. The deluxe edition comes with, amongst other things, a CD soundtrack and an extra video - *The Making of a Masterpiece*. (MFB No. 92)

The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty (Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter)

Connoisseur CR 048

West Germany/Austria 1971/2 Price £14.99

Certificate PG Director Wim Wenders

★ An ageing footballer has a nervous



Uncanny farce: 'Blithe Spirit'

breakdown, commits murder and goes on the run. Stark and impressive. Subtitles (MFB No. 503)

Hard to Kill

Warner PES 11914

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Bruce Malmuth

Steven Seagal attempts to strike a heroic pose somewhere between Jackie Chan and Clint Eastwood as a vengeful police detective fond of vigilante kickboxing. (MFB No. 678)

Hardware

Palace PVC 2174S

UK/USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Richard Stanley

Cyborgs and style wars in a clever piece of low-budget sci-fi junkyard futurism. The inventive robotics are not matched by the acting. (MFB No. 681)

Hellbound: Hellraiser II

RCA/Columbia CVR 21972

UK 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Tony Randel

More or less abandoned by their creator Clive Barker, a gang of confused cenobites stride around a film-set netherworld. (MFB No. 666)

The Hunt for Red October

CIC Video VHR 2406

USA 1990 Price £11.99

Certificate PG Director John McTiernan

★ Tense Cold War thriller, starring Sean Connery as an AWOL Russian naval commander who turns his nuclear submarine into a loose cannon. The fine cast includes Alec Baldwin and Sam Neill. (MFB No. 675)

Julius Caesar

MGM/UA Classics PES 50274

USA 1953 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Joseph

Mankiewicz

★ Thoughtful power-politics thriller, surprisingly faithful to Shakespeare's

original vision. Mellifluous verse by Marlon Brando, James Mason and John Gielgud. B/W (MFB No. 239)

The Killing Fields

Braveworld Premier Collection

STV 2062

UK 1984 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Roland Joffé

The Cambodian holocaust as experienced by journalist Sydney Schanberg and his assistant and friend Dith Pran. Gripping account of the horrors of war, spoiled only by a spurious and sentimental ending. (MFB No. 611)

Local Hero

Braveworld Premier Collection

STV 6023

UK 1983 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Bill Forsyth

★ Forsyth pits the power of a Texas oil company against the guile of a tiny Scottish fishing village. Whimsy wins the contest of wills, but the by-play is delightful. (MFB No. 591)

Lord of the Flies

Palace PVC 2167S

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Harry Hook

Conventional, overcautious version of William Golding's modern classic.



Monsieur Hulot rampant

Balthazar Getty and Chris Furrh lead the all-American cast of boy castaways. (MFB No. 678)

Memphis Belle

Warner PES 12040

UK 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Michael

Caton-Jones

Old-fashioned flag-waving as American kids play war games. Fashionable crooner-pianist Harry Connick Jr joins real actors like Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz. (MFB No. 680)

Mr Hulot's Holiday

(Les Vacances de Monsieur Hulot)

Connoisseur CR 049

France 1951/2 Price £14.99

Certificate U Director Jacques Tati

★ The gentle, bumbling Hulot ruins the peace of a seaside holiday hotel. A funny, affectionate and impeccably controlled satire of French provincial manners. English Language Version B/W (MFB No. 240)

My Father's Glory (La Gloire de mon père) My Mother's Castle (Le Château de ma mère)

Palace PCV 228S, 229S

France 1990 Price £15.99 each

Certificate U Director Yves Robert

This double-helping of peasant nostalgia is drawn from the writings of Marcel Pagnol. The second film outdoes its lightweight forebear in both humour and emotion. Subtitles (S&S June & August 1991)

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Braveworld Premier

Collection STV 2060

USA 1975 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Milos Forman

★ This adaptation of Ken Kesey's cult novel gets stronger as it grows older. Rational repression meets free-spirited rebellion in an insane asylum. Louise Fletcher and Jack Nicholson have never bettered their performances. (MFB No. 505)

Paperhouse

First Fright VA 30199

UK 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Bernard Rose

★ Billed by *Variety* as "the thinking person's *Nightmare on Elm Street*", Rose's film anchors its horrors at the heart of family life - a child's waking dreams burn down the house, and put a hammer in the hand of an absent father. (MFB No. 665)

A Passage to India

MGM/UA PES 54259

UK 1984 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director David Lean

Lean's last film seldom reflects the subtlety and humanity of Forster's novel but prompts a magnificent cameo from the late Peggy Ashcroft. (MFB No. 615)

Pet Sematary

CIC VHR 2375

USA 1989 Price £11.99

Certificate 18 Director Mary Lambert
★ His dead cat returns alive from an old American Indian gravesite, so Dr Creed (Dale Midkiff) knows what to do when his son dies. Genuinely creepy horror from the poison pen of Stephen King. (MFB No. 670)

Powaqqatsi

Cannon PES 54257

USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Godfrey Reggio
Sequel to *Koyaanisqatsi*, this study of Third World exploitation dissipates its anger with the beauty of its imagery, using experimental film techniques set to Philip Glass music. (MFB No. 655)

Red Sorghum (Hong Gaoliang)

Palace PVC 21285

China 1987 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Zhang Yimou
★ Extravagantly visual, highly assured debut feature from Yimou, a former cinematographer. The peasant life of a sorghum winery is destroyed by the Japanese invasion, with folk fairy-tale and brutal reality brought into violent conjunction. (MFB No. 662)

Reefer and the Model

Revision M5 012

Eire 1988 Price £14.99

Certificate 15 Director Joe Comerford
Comerford's film involves its comic, wayward trawlermen with all the taboos - homosexuality, dope, prostitution and the IRA - inside a catch-all net of Irish charm. (MFB No. 671)

Revenge

RCA/Columbia CVR 21975

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Tony Scott
A Mexican crime lord (Anthony Quinn) revenges the loss of his wife (Madeleine Stowe) to a young friend (Kevin Costner) in a number of brutal ways. Watchable, but not the film that John Huston (draftsman of an early script) might have made. (MFB No. 678)

Eric Rohmer Collection

Castle HEN 2 351, 352, 353, 354, 355
France (5 Tapes) Price £14.99 each

The Sign of Leo (Le Signe du lion)
1959



Arnold Schwarzenegger: a future too far

Certificate PG (MFB No. 394)

The Baker of Monceau/

Suzanne's Career

(La Boulangerie de Monceau/

La Carrière de Suzanne)

1962/1963 B/W

Certificate PG

Claire's Knee

(Le Genou de Claire)

1970

Certificate PG

Love in the Afternoon

(L'Amour, l'après-midi)

1972

Certificate 15 (MFB No. 468)

Perceval

(Perceval le Gallois)

1976

Certificate PG

★ First five of a number of projected releases covering the early and middle career of Rohmer. Included is his first feature *The Sign of Leo*, about a poor Paris musician; four among six films of his *Contes moraux* cycle, which pursue an obsessive analysis of men hesitating over their choice of women; and the unusual studio experiment *Perceval*, a reading of the twelfth-century epic poem by Chretien de Troyes. Subtitles

Ryan's Daughter

MGM/UA PES 50163

UK 1970 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director David Lean
An unfaithful young wife gets caught up in the Irish Troubles of 1916. Lean's portentous, humourless epic style makes the most of bleak locations on the Atlantic coast, but is ill-suited to the provincial subject. (MFB No. 444)

The Serpent and the Rainbow

CIC Video VHR 1362

USA 1987 Price £11.99

Certificate 18 Director Wes Craven
Craven indulges Haiti's reputation for satanic rituals, voodoo cults and walking zombies, but fails to make much of the more powerful real-life menace of the dreaded Ton Ton Macoute. (MFB No. 664)

A Tale of Two Cities

MGM/UA Classics PES 50078

USA 1935 Price £10.99

Certificate U Director Jack Conway
Respectable screen translation of Dickens' story of romance and revolution. Ronald Colman, Basil Rathbone and Edna May Oliver rise effortlessly above the howling mob. B/W (MFB No. 27)

Total Recall

Guild/Polygram 8633

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Paul Verhoeven
★ Arnold Schwarzenegger state-of-the-art FX movie. Philip K. Dick's story plays with time while Dan O'Bannon's script injects equal doses of brutality and wit. (MFB No. 679)

Retail premiere

Chopping Mall

First Fright VA 30201

USA 1986 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Jim Wynorski
Producer Julie Corman Screenplay Jim Wynorski, Steve Mitchell Lead Actors Kelli Maroney, Tony O'Dell, John Terlesky 73 minutes
As usual the poster art ("Shopping can cost you an arm and a leg") is wittier than the movie. Killer security robots run amok.

Crawlspace

First Fright VA 30200

USA 1986 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director David Schmoeller
Producer Charles Band Screenplay David Schmoeller
Photography Sergio Salvati Lead Actors Klaus Kinski, Talia Balsam, Barbara Whinnery, Carol Francis, Sally Brown 76 minutes

Women in a smart apartment block are being butchered, but nobody dreams of following the trail of blood into the attic after wild-eyed landlord Klaus Kinski. Bargain basement horror.

Ghoulies Go to College

First Fright VA 30203

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director John Carl Buechler
Producer Iain Paterson Screenplay Brent Olson Lead Actors Kevin McCarthy, Evan Mackenzie, Griffin O'Neal 93 minutes
Two rival college fraternities compete in juvenile pranks until an infestation of little beasts emerges from a toilet to spoil the party. Ghastly.

Howling V: The Re-birth

First Fright VA 30202

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Neal Sundstrom
Producer Clive Turner Screenplay Clive Turner, Freddie Rowe Photography Arledge Armenaki Lead Actors Philip Davis, Victoria Catlin, Elizabeth Shé, Ben Cole, William Shockley, Mary Stavin 92 minutes
A group of friends are unconvincingly trapped in an improbable gothic castle, where they fall prey to a ridiculous monster. Yet another interminable horror.

Megaville

Braveworld STV 2038

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director/Screenplay Peter Leiner
Producers Christina Schmidlin, Andres Pfaffli Photography Zoltan David Lead Actors Billy Zane, J.C. Quinn, Grace Zabriskie, Kristen Cloke, Stefan Gierasch, Daniel J. Travanti 90 minutes
Propelled by a memory implant plot excised from *Total Recall*, police assassin Palinov switches to self-destruct in a futureworld space city. Low-budget copycat thriller of very limited interest.

Tales from the Crypt

CIC Video VHR 1388

USA 1989 Price £11.99

Certificate 18 Directors Walter Hill, Robert Zemeckis, Richard Donner
Producers William Teitler, Joel Silver, Robert Zemeckis Screenplay Robert Roneau, Walter Hill, Fred Dekker, Terry Black Lead Actors Bill Sadler, Mary Ellen Trainor, Larry Drake, Joe Pantoliano, Robert Wuhl, Kathleen York 73 minutes
Three terror-tales introduced by a popcorn-eating skeleton. Richard Donner's story of *Ulric the Undying* - a man with nine lives but a poor grasp of mathematics - is the best and funniest contribution.

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

Encouraging debate

From Alan Lovell

Mamoun Hassan deserves our thanks for the support he gave Bill Douglas. It seems a pity, though, that in his article about Douglas' career (S&S November 1991), he should still be fighting old battles. It's a travesty to suggest that some of Douglas' difficulties were due to the activities of the BFI Members' Action Group of the 60s.

As a former member of the group, I don't remember that we had any power to influence how money was spent by the BFI. That power belonged to the BFI governors, with whom Hassan had a close relationship. If it were simply a matter of fighting old battles, I'd be happy to let Hassan go on fighting them unchallenged. But the battles have some consequences for the present.

The Members' Action Group challenged the basic way BFI production funding operated. It argued that instead of funding on an individual and one-off basis, funding should (a) go to groups rather than individuals, as theatre funding traditionally had done, and (b) be sustained over a period of time.

It was only in the early 80s, when the support of ACTT produced the Workshop Declaration, that these ideas became practical realities. The setting up of the Workshops was a brave move on the part of Channel 4 and the BFI, even if the results were far from perfect.

But what concerns me most is that both Channel 4 and the BFI are moving back to the old individual, one-off basis for funding without a proper debate taking place. And this debate has an immediate relevance for the new *Sight and Sound*, since the magazine has taken an active interest in the intellectual currents which produced the Workshops. For example, Graham Murdock's recent article (S&S October 1991) includes the Workshops in an attempt to construct a new rationale for Public Service Broadcasting.

Such a debate should certainly take in the discussion about the 'popular' referred to in your last editorial – though it needs, I think, to be developed. Couldn't you encourage such a debate to take place? *Birmingham Film and Video Workshop*

Mean streets

From Dominic Strinati

Towards the end of his article on gangster films and ethnicity (S&S November 1991) Mark Winokur claims "the purpose of the gangster film is finally to render... a safe ethnicity... it is represented and made harmless". But for whom is it represented in this way, and for whom is it rendered harmless? The ethnic groups themselves? The Hollywood corporations? The film-makers? Or the diverse and diversified movie-going public?

These thoughts are provoked not just by Winokur's arguments, but by the impressions left by two recent 'ethnic

gangster' or crime films – *Goodfellas* and *Boyz n the Hood*. In these films, ethnicity is anything but safe; it is made vivid, criticised, and turned inside out by the 'ethnic' film-makers involved. In *Goodfellas*, one of Scorsese's stated aims was to show the ordinariness of lower-level mafiosi and how they otherwise live normal lives. According to Scorsese, the film is about ordinary Italian-American families, some of whose members just happen to be gangsters. This suggests – and I put it no stronger than that – a possible ambivalence on the part of the ethnic groups or certain sections among them (and not on the part of the mass captive, consumer audience Winokur refers to in passing) in their responses to these films. For they may register the duality and ambiguity of these themes – nostalgia and indictment, the closeness, warmth and support of the ethnic family, and the horror and violence of the crimes it begets.

Typically, the familiar device of the modern gangster film is to enclose the main male protagonists together. Ethnic crime in films, in this sense, is very much about marginalising women.

But both *Goodfellas* and *Boyz* are interesting exceptions. Unlike the *Godfather* films, they provide a much clearer sense of the 'ethnic neighbourhood', of being in and growing up in the spaces – the 'mean streets' – where ethnicity, community, the family and crime meet up, and where men are meant to be mean. As such they begin to open out in a more sustained and serious way what masculinity and femininity mean within the confines of ethnicity, the family and the neighbourhood. In *Boyz*, Tre only sleeps with Brandi when he shows his more vulnerable and helpless side and when their love-making can no longer be seen as female submission to insistent male urges. And in *Goodfellas*, Henry not only turns state witness against his (substitute) family, but only turns to Karen when she confronts and upstages his swaggering, streetwise masculinity.

Leicester

Praising Kane

From Charles Fyffe

Was *Citizen Kane* a great film in a morass of mediocre Hollywood movies (Andrew Sarris, S&S October 1991)? In 1941 the US produced, apart from *Kane*, 490 other films, just under nine-and-a-half a week. In London most cinemas ran two films for a week; some changed mid-week (a practice more common outside London), requiring four films a week. What you saw, week after week, was the same collection of well-known actors playing familiar stereotypes (Sam Goldwyn is supposed to have said that a film is about a him and a her and a yellow coyote to spoil the fun). The stories were conventional and banal, and addressed to an adolescent audience, which was why, at the time, I enjoyed them so much.

I can still recall what an eye- and ear-opener *Citizen Kane* was. Here, it seemed, was a film about real people, dealing with adult problems. It still seems to me to be so. People who became old not by dusting



'Boyz n the Hood': the gangster as 'new man'

their hair with white powder, but by becoming lined, sagging, bald. I do not recall ever seeing, before *Kane*, a glamorous actress made to look as Dorothy Comingore looked after being stomach-pumped. It was, after all, an era when we were asked to accept in films that a woman about to give birth still had a narrow waist and completely flat belly.

I have read how little in the film was original, how Welles copied this film and that film, this and that director, how he owed it all to Mankiewicz or Greg Toland, and so on. I must have seen all the films he is supposed to have copied, and I can't remember one of them, and I have a good memory for films. "Even in 1941", writes Sarris, "there were several movies on the same level of excellence". Which? *The Little Foxes*, a play; *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, another play; *The Maltese Falcon*, a novel; *How Green Was My Valley*, another novel?

Hannen Swaffer in his column in what was then the journalists' trade paper, *World Press News* (does it still exist?) devoted most of it, if I remember aright, to a hatchet job on *Kane*. He claimed that, as he left the theatre, Sidney (now Lord) Bernstein, head of the Granada chain of cinemas, said "Who the hell was Rosebud anyway?", a comment that Swaffer completely agreed with. Were they very stupid? Or were they, like the average audience, looking for their coats and getting ready to leave before the film ended?

On the possibility that Welles could have been blacklisted as a red, I recall an interview in which he said that when some oaf from the HUAC asked him if he was a communist, Welles asked, "What is a communist or communism?" "When you have to give all your money to the Government." "Then I'm 75 per cent communist, because that's what I pay in taxes". He also said he offered more than once to appear before the HUAC, as did Chaplin. In both cases the offer was refused, probably because the Committee was fly enough to realise that it would get the worst of the encounters.

London NW6

Cinema hero

From Jocelyn Moorhouse

I want to thank Peter Brunette for an interview that made me sound so much more relaxed and articulate than I recall being at the time (S&S, LFF Supplement 1991). I would, however, like to correct a slightly embarrassing error. As much as I would love to be able to claim a previous association with one of my cinema heroes, Nicolas Roeg, I can't. I have never worked with him. I probably said during the interview that I enjoyed the work of Roeg, not – as the interview quotes me as saying – that I enjoyed working with him.

Victoria, Australia

Small pleasures

In 'Small Pleasures' (S&S November 1991), the book *Days of Vision* was attributed to Don Thompson. The author's name should have read Don Taylor. Ann Shubik should have read Irene Shubik, who was a *Play for Today* producer.

Graphic success

Benjamin Woolley

This year's London Film Festival was the first to have a section devoted to computer graphics and animation. It was a precedent difficult to object to: any survey of any medium must be broad-minded enough to embrace new technologies. In any case, nobody could deny that computer-generated images are now part of cinematic culture, particularly after the success of a blockbuster like *Terminator 2*, and so deserve the sort of sober, detached assessment a film festival can offer.

But at the same time a little voice asks me whether it can really be right. John Lasseter's animations, featured in a session devoted to his work, are unequalled for their humour by any mainstream cartoon since the heyday of Hannah Barbera and Disney, so they should feature anyway. But neither he, nor the others in the section, were there for the quality of their work. They were there because of the technology that had been used to produce their work. Would *real* art accept an invitation on such terms?

Few computer-generated films are the product of the usual artistic or commercial channels. Most are the result of a relatively new form of artistic patronage, a form not too distant from PR. Though personal computers have made the basic technology relatively cheap and readily available, the sort of machine needed to generate the images featured at the festival is no desktop system – it is more likely

to be the sort used to compute global climate patterns or the aerodynamics of a fighter's flight surfaces.

For example, Karl Sims, for me one of the most interesting contributors to the field, generates his films using a Connection Machine, a 'massively parallel' computer covered in winking red lights. It costs so much that the only one in this country, recently installed at Edinburgh University, is a cut-down version with only a quarter the processing power of the one Sims has been using.

You do not need a Connection Machine to create computer graphics, but you do need something like it for genuine animation – for using the computer to create the images rather than to act as a glorified drawing tool. That is why no Arts Council-aided garret artist or BFI-backed art film auteur is going to be able to build a useful body of computer-generated work.

But nor can a Hollywood director. Until *Terminator 2* hit the screens, computer graphics were regarded with suspicion by the commercial film world for the simple reason that their use had such a bad track record. Nobody wanted to produce another *Tron*. Only now are the studios, led by Disney, contemplating production of a completely computer-generated film.

So it has been up to the computer companies themselves to succour the work. They have done this by giving artists access to their equipment, on the commercially reasonable grounds that what the artists then produced would count as



A NEW STAIR IN TOWN

The idea that computer graphics is a new 'medium' that has to be taken seriously is now firmly on the agenda

'art'. Art, here, embraces the work of William Latham, the IBM 'Fellow' whose bona fides include a spell at the Royal College of Art, to the more mainstream Lasseter, whose cartoons were funded by the graphics house Pixar to show off its graphics 'rendering' system software.

The strategy has worked a treat. As the London Film Festival has demonstrated, commerce has successfully turned the non-commercial values of the art world to its own promotional ends. The idea that computer graphics is a new 'medium' that has to be taken seriously is now firmly on the agenda. Of course, the art world realises this, but there is very little it can do about it.

Does that matter? Well, the work is pretty sexy and draws a good crowd. But there is a risk of unfair competition. If it is done on a computer – and looks unfamiliar enough to pass as something done on a computer, and has had enough corporate cash thrown at it to ensure adequate production values, and is available free, which it usually is as long as its sponsor's name is prominently shown alongside – then it stands a good chance of being shown, regardless of aesthetic merit.

Perhaps that is inevitable, and perhaps we should applaud the chance it gives non-technologists to explore the possibilities of technological products. But it does seem a bit unfair that the products of one fiercely free market should continue to benefit quite so easily from the distortion of another.

Professor Potemkin's competition

Yes, the rain-soaked neo-realists wading through the gutters of our October issue were indeed Enzo Staiola and Lamberto Maggiorani in Vittorio De Sica's handlebar epic, *'Bicycle Thieves'*.

Congratulations to many thousands, and especially to our regular field agent Steve Tate of Leicester. He enclosed a film still of his own – a postcard of the Piazza San Marco, Venice, under three feet of lagoon water. A man at the cathedral steps looks gloomily at a two-wheeler lying in the wet, with a think-balloon captioned: "Hello, someone's lost a bike".

Nice try, Mr Tate, but you must restrict your fertile imagination to the images supplied by our hard-working archive restorers. Without wishing to dampen Christmas spirits, I have to say that the caption quality was on the soggy side for this competition. There were all too many convoluted references to



plumber's mates, Norman Tebbit or Michael Fish, and to a certain Stanley Donen musical featuring Gene Kelly.

Mr Herbert Benskin of Dorset supplied a brilliant caption – "So this is what they call tap dancing". Unfortunately, he convinced

himself that the film in question really was *'Singin' in the Rain'*, so his entry must be ruled out of order. Honours, and a complimentary copy of George Sluizer's *'The Vanishing'*, go to Richard Martin of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He offered this pertinent scrap of dialogue: "Dad – wouldn't a boat be preferable to a bike?"

Rules for the Christmas competition remain unaffected by vain jollity. Name the movie and actors, cook up some hot dialogue, serve with style, and win a tinsel-wrapped copy of the revised and updated second edition of *The Time Out Film Guide*, published by Penguin Books. And since it's Christmas, we have three copies to give away. Lively cards (seasonal or otherwise) by 15 December to Professor Potemkin, Sight and Sound, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (or fax: 071 437 2327). And no turkeys, please.



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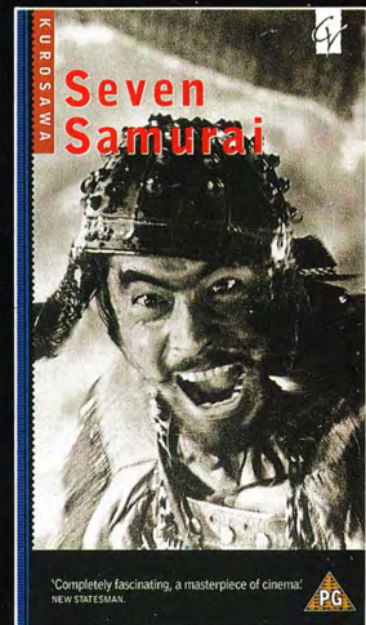
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